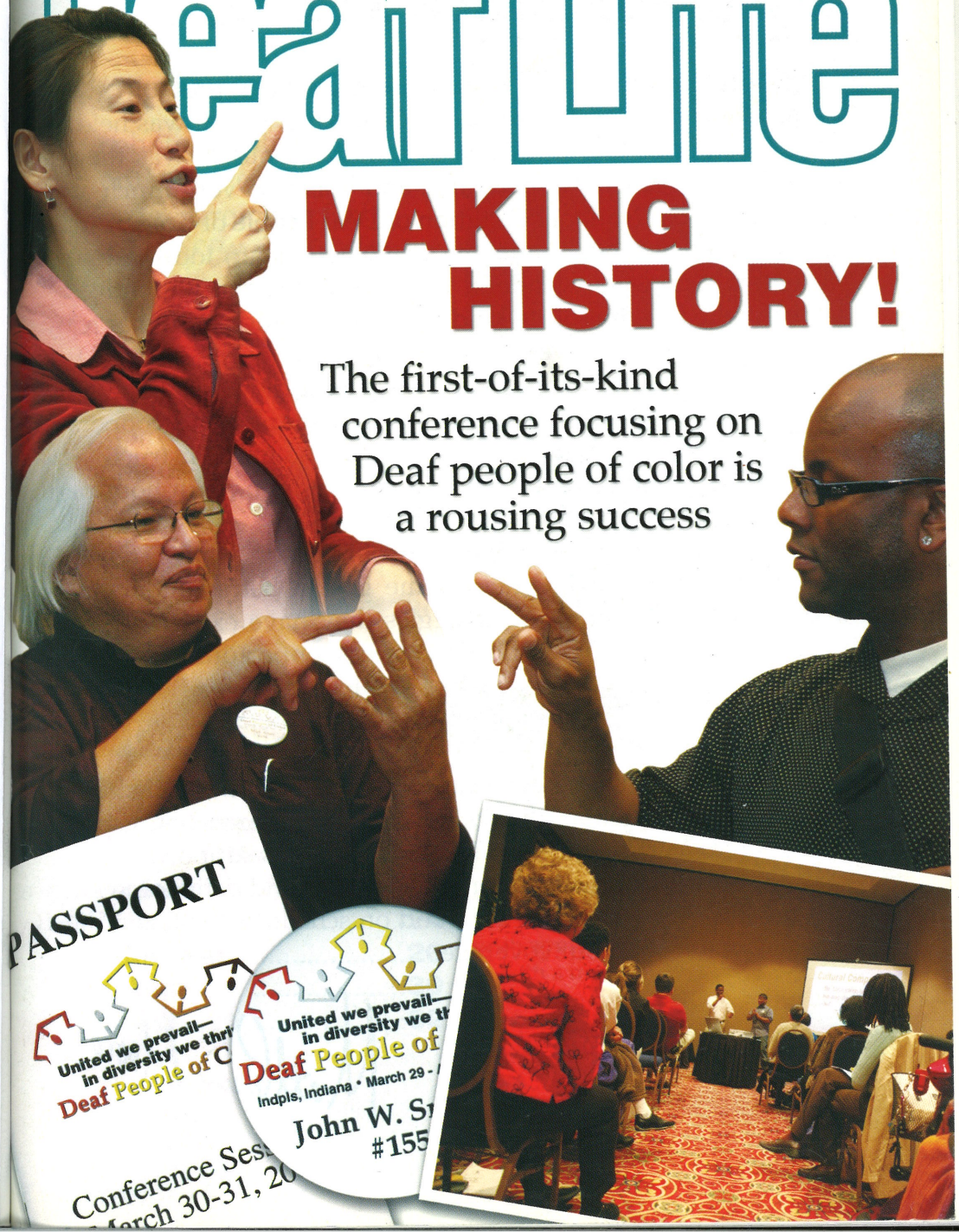
May 2007

DeafLife

$5.00

MAKING HISTORY!

The first-of-its-kind conference focusing on Deaf people of color is a rousing success



Deaf Life PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This month's cover feature is a special report on the *First National Deaf People of Color Conference*, which was held from March 29 through April 1 in Indianapolis. It was the result of over a year of careful planning, and was also very much a team effort. The *ad hoc* National Coalition of Deaf People of Color, Program Coordinator Laurene Simms, my crew, hotel staff, local volunteers, presenters, sponsors, vendors, and, of course, the attendees—all helped make this first-of-its-kind conference a success. It was a joy to be part of this historic event.

One thing I especially appreciated was the high level of energy among the participants. Another was the spirit of sharing and cooperation. Encouraged to express their views, they did so in a constructive way. Disagreements were conducted in a civil fashion, with both parties listening to, and respecting, each other.

My involvement as Conference Coordinator was a rewarding experience for me. It has helped me gain a better understanding of Deaf people of color, the struggles they have experienced, their hunger for a better life—education, access, opportunities—and their joy in meeting others who have had similar experiences. Networking was one of the *Conference's* goals, and we all benefited from it. I enjoy building bridges.

I wish to thank all of those who participated and those who made this possible. Particular thanks to our major sponsors, especially Gallaudet University and CSD for their generous support.

Thanks to you, our readers, for your support and patience, while we get **DEAF LIFE** back on track . . . and on schedule. We'll continue to improve and expand our coverage.

Matthew Moore

Deaf Life CHART

Our cover story

The photo-montage on this month's cover incorporates images from the *First National Deaf People of Color Conference*: presenters, attendees, a workshop, a personalized badge, and a passport. It was a high-spirited, high-energy, enthusiastic group of participants—and the hours flew by so quickly! **30**

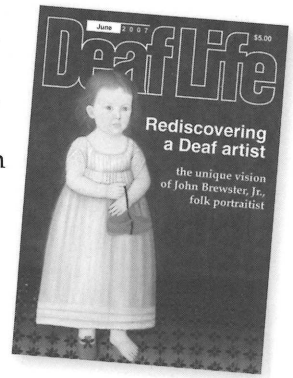
Photos by Carmel Flores, © 2007 MSM Productions, Ltd.

Deaf Life Departments

Deaf **Mail** **5**
For Hearing People Only **6**
DeafPeople in **History** **12**
DeafPerson of the **Month** **18**
Deaf **Trivia** **24**
Deaf **Almanac** **26**
Deaf **Cover** **30**
Deaf **View** **62**

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE...

Thanks to Harlan Lane's new book, John Brewster, Jr., has been gaining fresh appreciation as both a major early American folk artist, and a Deaf artist as well.



VOLUME XII, NUMBER 5

Deaf Life

DEAF LIFE (ISSN 0898-719X) is published monthly for $60.00 per year ($72.00 outside of the U.S.) by MSM Productions, Ltd., 1095 Meigs St., Rochester, NY 14620. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is Pending at Rochester, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **DEAF LIFE** c/o MSM Productions, Box 23380, Rochester, New York 14692-3380.
The entire contents of **DEAF LIFE** are copyright © 2007. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. For more information, contact **DEAF LIFE**.

PUBLISHER
Matthew S. Moore*

CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Matthew S. Moore
Linda Levitan*

COPY EDITOR
Linda Levitan

ART DIRECTOR
Matthew S. Moore

CIRCULATION MANAGER
David D. Long*

OFFICE ASSISTANT
Diane M. White*

ADVISORY BOARD
TBA

CONTRIBUTORS
John J. Schmidt
Mimi Schwaneflugel

The Publisher and Editor-in-Chief are not responsible for the opinions and statements made by either Editors or Contributors to **DEAF LIFE**. The Publisher and Editor-in-Chief reserve the right to edit all letters and articles. Publication of advertisements in **DEAF LIFE** does not in any way constitute our endorsement of the services or products advertised.

A LABOR OF LOVE: Asterisks (*) mark volunteer staffers who donate their time and talents to **DEAF LIFE** as a community service. They earn no salaries.

Deaf Life

Subscription Service

How to contact us
For all correspondence regarding your subscription, please use the following address:

Deaf Life
Subscription Service
Box 23380
Rochester, New York 14692-3380

If you prefer E-mail, the address is:
subs2007@deaflife.com

Or if you prefer to chat with us live, our AIM address is deaflifemagazine.

Whenever possible, when you write or E-mail, please include your subscription number and your name and address exactly as they appear on the label.

Change of Address
Please give us 8 weeks' notice in advance of an address change so we can ensure uninterrupted service. Send us your old address on the mailing label from your magazine, along with your new address to our address above. Or notify us at coa2007@deaflife.com.

Renewals
We want to be sure your subscription continues smoothly, so we send renewal notices well in advance of the expiration date (it's on your mailing label) via E-mail or card. Your quick response will help prevent any break in your subscription.

Deaf Life MAIL

From Oklahoma . . .

I have always enjoyed **Deaf Life** magazine and was quite saddened when I learned it had stopped publishing. It is such a delight to know that **Deaf Life** once again will be published. I enjoyed reading the January 2007 issue. FANTASTIC publication! I look forward to the future issues.

DEAFinitely,

Samuel Anthony
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

. . . and Virginia . . .

It is good to see **Deaf Life** magazine back to life after few years of absence. I hope the things may go well with the publication of **Deaf Life**.

I just got two **Deaf Life** magazines (January & February) already. It turned out real good.

Keep up the good work!

Byron L. Heath
Mechanicsville, Virginia

. . . and Florida

Just wanted you to know I think you have done a great job on writing good stories in your **Deaf Life** magazines. I really have enjoyed reading all of (2) **Deaf Life** mags. I look forward to reading more mags when they come to my mailbox in the future!

I ***do*** wish you do luck in all of your **Deaf Life** success! Please let me know if I can be of a help anytime to support you all! Keep up the good work!

Many, many thanks!

I am 100% proud of **Deaf Life's** mags!

Jill Grimshaw
Clearwater, Florida

The Editors reply: *Thanks to you all for your patience and support! We will continue to add more exciting features and celebrate Deaf history.*

Deaf Life MAIL

LETTER POLICY

All letters must be signed and have a return address. No anonymous (unsigned) letters will be pulished. but we will withhold your name on request. Send letters to: **DEAF LIFE**, c/o MSM Productions, Box 23380, Rochester, NY 14692-3380. FAX: 585-442-6371.

FOR HEARING PEOPLE ONLY

Should hearing parents relinquish custody of their deaf children to Deaf advocates?

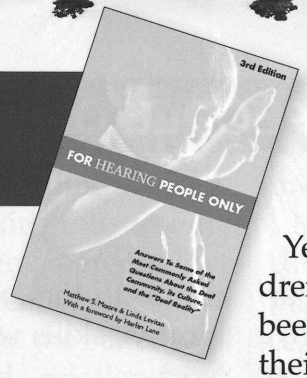
An accusation popularized by anti-Deaf Culture extremists is that Deaf advocates want to take deaf children away from their hearing parents so they can be raised in the Deaf Culture. This radical notion is highlighted in Lew Golan's book, **Reading Between the Lips**. Golan, a belligerent, wisecracking oralist, uses it as ammunition against the fanaticism of the so-called "ASL militants." He attributes this preposterous sentiment to Harlan Lane, that favorite target of Deaf Culture-bashers.

This notion (which we call the "handover gripe") may shake up some folks and make them think twice—or harden the resolve of some parents to keep their deaf children out of the Deaf community and away from the clutches of the ASL advocates.

We know of no hearing parents who have willingly ceded their deaf children to Deaf advocates. There are only three situations we know of in which hearing parents have given over their deaf children to others: 1) surrendering custody preliminary to adoption, 2) removal from abusive and otherwise dysfunctional homes by social-service authorities, and 3) outright abandonment.

Parents *have* voluntarily relinquished custody of deaf children—either knowingly, because they didn't want them, or unknowingly, because they wanted the child to have a better life than they could provide.

Abandoning a deaf child is, unfortunately, a much more common occurrence. It is not unknown for a hearing family to reject, ostracize, or even expel a deaf child.



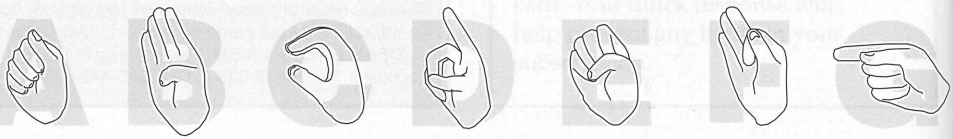
As Lou Ann Walker recounts in "Vanilla Fires," her classic report on a Deaf gang in the Bronx, the Nasty Homicides, several families literally left their deaf teenaged boys on the streets because they didn't want them any more. They didn't relinquish custody; they threw the kids out.

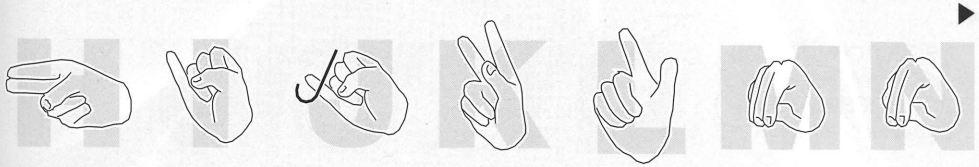
Otherwise, the idea of Deaf advocates making their rounds from house to house, collecting deaf children from hearing parents, and bringing them home to raise in a Deaf Culture environment is sheer fantasy—wishful thinking, Deaf-militant proposal, or audist-militant phobia. No Deaf advocates came to the door to claim the Bronx boys who found acceptance among other Deaf outcasts and fringe members of society: their gang. Contact with Deaf advocates and ASL-fluent social workers came later.

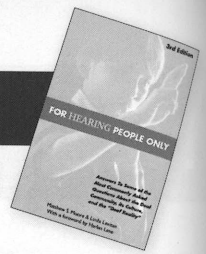
Yes, we've met some deaf children whom we felt would have been better off removed from their parents' homes because they were neglected and abused, or were not getting proper exposure to language. (That was, and still is, a matter for the city and county social-services and educational agencies to take up. Our society doesn't take kindly to vigilante-style social intervention.) And we know of several mature Deaf adults and hearing signers who would be delighted to adopt deaf children, knowing that they could give them a good home and a rich ASL environment.

The advent of the Internet has facilitated connecting deaf children with adoptive parents—there's the Deaf Adoption Network and a dedicated listserv. Most of the deaf children featured in DAN's gallery of adoptables were relinquished to foreign orphanages, and several have multiple handicaps or chronic illnesses.

In real life (at least in the ▶







U.S.A.), the vast majority of parents of deaf children *don't* give them up. Deaf children who are removed from their families are transferred to the care of other parents for various reasons—but certainly not simply because ASL advocates think it's a good idea.

There are Deaf people who have been foster and adoptive parents to deaf children who were legally relinquished by, or removed from, their birth parents, and were placed with these parents because they offered a stable and loving environment for the children. The parents in question weren't chosen because of their political beliefs, but because they had good reputations with the authorities, and proved that they could do the job. Their communicative skills were, of course, an asset.

Very few hearing parents would willingly give their deaf children up for anything or anyone. The ones who do are the exceptions.

Very few parents of deaf children, with the possible exception the ones who have rejected their children and thrown them out onto the street, or are so incompetent that the social-welfare authorities intervene to have their children removed from their homes, would willingly give them up for anyone or anything. Most hearing parents love their deaf children just as much as they do their hearing children, and, whatever their decisions pertaining to communicative modes or audiological intervention, want to do right by them. They resent being branded as "genocidal oppressors." They also resent the implication that their being hearing renders them unfit to parent deaf children.

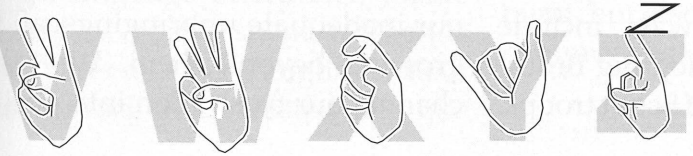
One arrogant and self-righteous father of a deaf child with a cochlear implant accused Harlan Lane and other anti-implant advocates of not taking into account how much hearing parents love their deaf children, and of conspiring "to invade the sanctity of the parent/child relationship." Although he has insisted that he doesn't disrespect Deaf Culture, this man's defensive belligerence communicates a strong message of contempt: Dammit, this is *my* child and *I'll* do with her what *I*, as a father, see fit, and you have no moral right to tell *me* what to do! Buzz off, Deaf advocates.

Choosing the oral option is not necessarily an act of contempt for the Deaf community, although it can be seen as that in theory and practice. Installing an implant in a deaf child's head is not necessarily a sign of child abuse, cultural genocide, or anti-Deaf hatred. As bitterly as Deaf advocates feel about it, these allegations wouldn't hold up in court. The plaintiffs (the advocates) would have to prove that the defendants (the parents) were neglecting and/or abusing the deaf child, according to well-established criteria, and that the child was suffering detrimental effects from this situation.

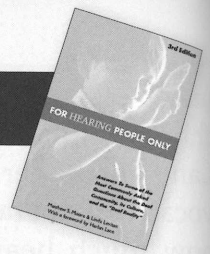
Much as we wish that all deaf children were born into families that not only loved but also accepted, cherished, and understood them, and accommodated their needs, we know that reality presents a different picture.

The "handover gripe" is motivated by our communal history—the stories told by deaf adults of the terrible pain and isolation they experienced, growing up in families where they were denied true communication with their parents, siblings, relatives, and family friends. Some Deaf people have tremendous, and unresolved, anger towards their parents because of this, and wish to spare other deaf children this same experience. As we have pointed out again and again, too many parents never learn how to communicate—*really* communicate—with their deaf children. This is shameful and tragic. And it's part of our reality.

Asking hearing parents to relinquish their deaf children to the Deaf community is the equivalent ▶



DO NOT PHOTOCOPY WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.
All rights reserved.



of a political war cry. Asking that parents of deaf children make an effort to connect with the Deaf community is a more reasonable request. Deaf children, especially those in mainstream and oral programs, are often starved for adult deaf mentors, since they may have contact with very few or none.

If Deaf adults wish to mentor deaf children, there are several ways to get involved. One way is to participate in a school or community agency's early-intervention program. Deaf mentors visit the child and parents, teach, sign, and play with them, show the parents how they can read to their toddlers while encouraging storytelling and communication skills, and, in general, provide invaluable companionship, encouragement, reassurance, friendship, and support for the parents and a good language model for the child. Some of these mentors may even become a cherished part of the family. Other ways include Volunteers in Literacy, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Deaf Scout troops, and registering as foster parents. For multi-handicapped deaf children, and those with learning disabilities, the demand for foster/adoptive parents exceeds the supply. And then there's the full-scale foreign-adoption option.

As we have pointed out, when Deaf advocates have hearing children, they usually don't throw them out or give them away; they lavish the same sort of love and concern on them that they would on deaf children.

And as one of our "DeafView" respondents suggested, if hearing parents don't know how to sign with their deaf children, the ideal legal recourse is not to remove them from their parents' custody, but to encourage the parents to learn sign language.

Personally, we don't presume to know all the answers. We speak from our own experience as deaf children of hearing parents. As adults, we are capable of transcending the shortcomings of our inadequate upbringings, and growing beyond them. We can channel our frustration into positive directions: educating others and offering counsel and support to new parents. ■

A Deaf child's rights: the Sonya Kinney case

There have been a number of court cases involving deaf children whose parents either wanted them to receive a sign-language-based education (which they weren't getting), or wanted them removed from a sign-language-based program (where they had been placed by their school district against the parents' wishes).

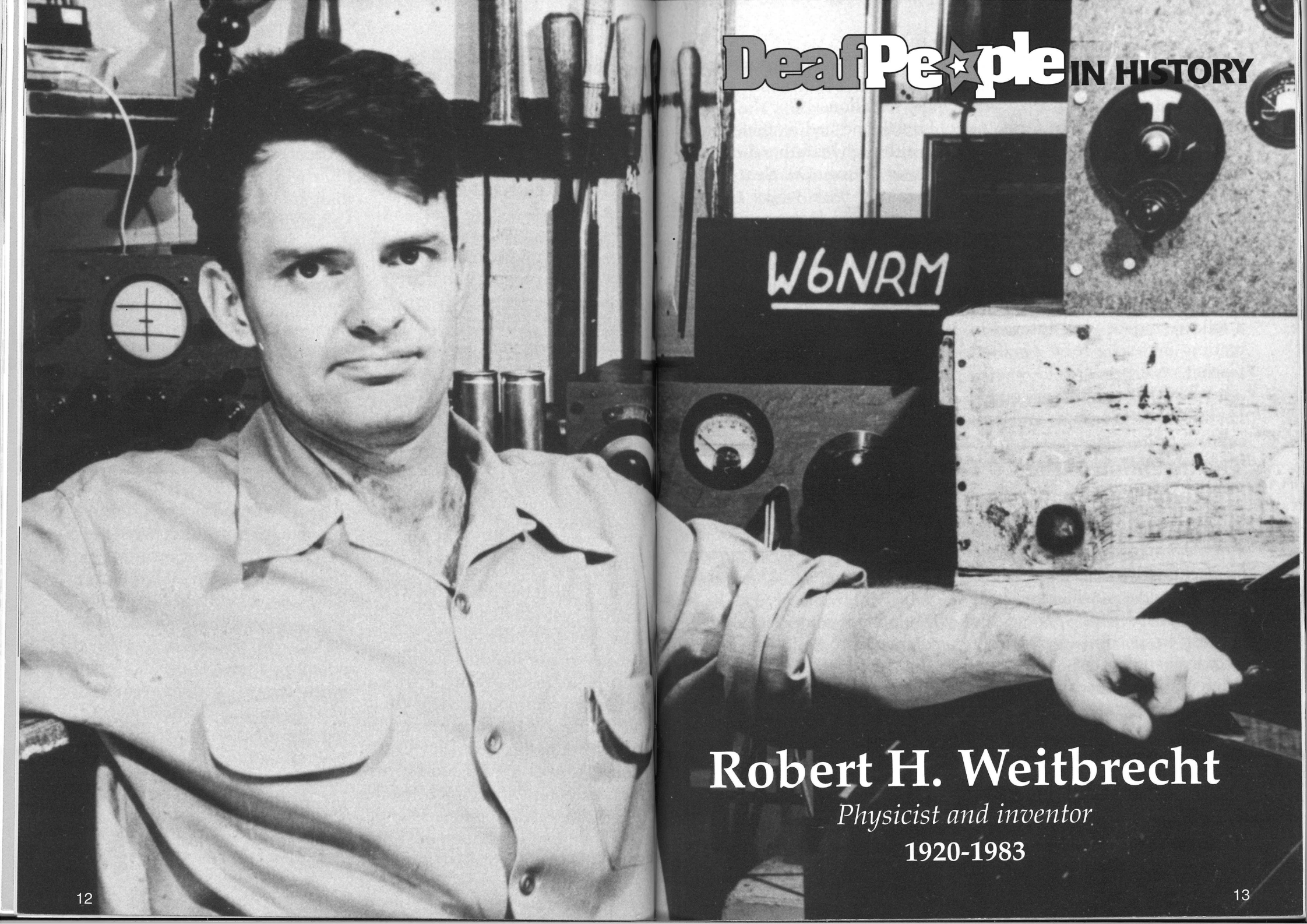
Deaf advocates usually don't toss out their hearing children; they keep—and love—them.

Does a parent's refusal to sign with a deaf child constitute child abuse? Can it be considered a factor in a custody dispute?

In May 1995, the case of Sonya Kinney made national headlines and legal history. Sonya was a neglected and abused deaf child attending a mainstream program in Wilmington, North Carolina. She was befriended by her sign-language interpreter, Joanie Hughes. Sonya spent weekends with her and her daughters, Kelli and Traci, who treated her like a sister. Hughes gradually took on responsibility for Sonya's health care and well-being. Neither Sonya's mother, LeAnn, who alternated custody of her children with her ex-husband, Norman, had learned sign language; LeAnn forbade it at home (a run-down trailer). Norman communicated with Sonya by stomping and pointing.

Ultimately, Sonya went to court to have Norman's parental rights severed. (LeAnn didn't even show up.) Sonya testified on her own behalf, in eloquent ASL. Hughes won sole custody of Sonya, and both left the court in jubilation.

This case established a precedent: a parent losing a deaf child partly because the parent refused to sign to the child. The court recognized that Sonya, as a deaf person, had a right not only to a stable, supportive home environment, but also to free, unimpeded communication. ■



Robert H. Weitbrecht

Physicist and inventor

1920-1983

Robert Haig Weitbrecht was born profoundly deaf in Orange, California, on April 11, 1920, and grew up on an orange farm. As soon as they realized he was deaf, his parents enrolled him in a correspondence course and began teaching him to speechread. A few years later, he was placed in a small private school for deaf children. But when his teacher left to take a public-school post, he and a fellow student were tutored in reading and speech by a retired teacher.

It wasn't all tedium, of course. He was taken to orange- and lemon-packing houses, beet fields, rope factories, wineries, and dairies. These trips sparked his interest in science—particularly electrical equipment—as he examined milking machines, generators, and separators, then wrote class papers about them.

After his teacher died in 1931, his parents enrolled him in public school. Although he managed to keep up academically with his hearing classmates, Bob hated being the butt of their teasing and cruel jokes. He became increasingly rebellious.

Luckily, he had a stable family life, although his father died while he was young. On clear nights, the family took walks together and stargazed. Bob soon became fascinated with astronomy, which became a lifelong passion. Armed with a sky-map and a small telescope, he studied the constellations with his parents, speechread them by flashlight, and learned the names and positions of the stars. Wrapped in a blanket, he would sit up late, alone, waiting to see a meteor streak across the sky. In 1930, when he was 10, he wrote a class composition about a solar eclipse. And when he was 18, he won the Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award for the reflecting telescope he constructed. He designed the mounting himself in the high-school machine shop; it used an old Ford axle and a 6-inch Pyrex disk for a mirror.

The invention of the TU accomplished what the huge telephone companies were unable, or unwilling, to do—give deaf people access to the telephone system.

After graduating with honors in science from Santa Ana Junior College, he enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley, which had a small Astronomy Department. Finally, he found an academic environment where he fitted in comfortably. He made friends among the faculty and students. With the help of a modest scholarship and a number of odd jobs, he worked his way through. He worked and studied with another deaf student, who taught him sign language. But aside from occasional notes borrowed from classmates, he received no support services. In 1942, he received his Bachelor's in Astronomy with honors.

World War II had begun, and he chose to remain at Berkeley. From 1942 to 1945, he worked as a physicist on the Manhattan Project at UCB's Radiation Laboratory ("Cyclotron Hill"), under the direction of the distinguished nuclear physicist, Professor Ernest Orlando Lawrence, co-inventor of the cyclotron, the first high-energy particle accelerator ("atom-splitter"). He spent many nights in the observatory studying double stars and planets.

He worked at UC's Aeromedical Laboratory from 1945 to 1947, then as an electronics scientist at the U. S. Naval Air Missile Test Center in Point Mugu, California (1947-1951), where he helped develop precision timing and number-coding systems and designed radar systems, electronic optical devices for cameras, and also developed the "WWV" Radio Time Signal used worldwide today. For this, the U. S. Navy awarded him a Superior Accomplishment Award in 1949.

From 1951 to 1957, he was a Research Associate at Yerkes Observatory, University of Chicago. While earning a Master's in Astronomy there, he helped develop photoelectric guiding systems and photometers. He received his M.S. in 1952.

Returning to California, he worked at Stanford Research Institute's Communications Laboratory from 1958 to 1969. There, he designed a precision astrometric camera system for the Lick Observatory—the first electronically-guided camera in the world. He also worked for NASA on an earth-satellite (ECHO) project.

He received his amateur-radio license in 1936, and used amplified Morse Code to communicate. In 1951 he petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to open low-frequency amateur-

radio bands to Radio Teletype (RTTY). FCC Docket #10073 opened bands to RTTY in 1953. Subsequently, Weitbrecht was active in research and development of anti-fade systems for improved RTTY reception.

Weitbrecht tended to be shy, moody, and socially awkward. He enjoyed hiking in the mountains alone or with a friend. He lived in a two-bedroom duplex in Redwood City. One bedroom was converted into a ham-radio shack; the living room was strewn with equipment and books. He always had a companion dog in his life.

In 1964, Dr. James C. Marsters, a deaf orthodontist in Pasadena, sent Weitbrecht a Teletype Model 32ASR and asked him to set up a system so they could communicate with each other. They both formed a partnership with Andrew Saks, a deaf mechanical engineer-businessman.

During his spare time, Weitbrecht began working on the acoustic coupler or terminal unit (TU). This enabled typewritten communication over telephone lines, using Teletype teleprinters (TTYs). The first public demonstration of experimental TUs was staged in June 1964 in Salt Lake City. Other demonstrations followed, bringing in leaders from the oral and signing factions of the Deaf community. This was an issue that all deaf people could agree on.

Meanwhile, the partners dealt with the steadfast indifference and opposition of the FCC and AT&T. Discarded teleprinters began to be released by Western Union and other companies, and these were reconditioned by the partners and trained volunteers, equipped with TUs, and placed with members of the expanding TTY network.

Weitbrecht acquired a patent on his TU in 1965; the partners formed the Robert H. Weitbrecht Company to manufacture them. In 1967, they launched the Applied Communications Corporation (APCOM). APCOM began marketing TUs under the trademark "Phonetype." None of the partners profited financially from this venture, however.

After being laid off by Stanford Research Institute in 1969, Weitbrecht continued his quest to develop an affordable, portable, and efficient TTY. He worked full-time for APCOM until it closed in 1982. The partners continued to network, travel, demonstrate, and advocate, recruiting deaf leaders, disseminating technical advice and support.

Weitbrecht's new friend and collaborator, Robert Engelke, founded Ultratec in 1980. Weitbrecht Communications, associated with Ultratec, was founded in 1982, and Weitbrecht was hired as chief engineer. For the first time, his TU patent was honored by another company, and he received royalties.

TTY advocacy brought together those from the oralist and signing factions of the community—this was a cause that united *all* deaf people.

A grassroots Distribution Committee was formed in Indianapolis in 1968 to handle refurbishment and distribution of surplus TTYs. This organization is now known as TDI.

Slowly, steadily, interest—and demand—grew. By the end of 1982, there were over 150,000 TTYs in the United States—mostly in deaf people's homes, but also in public places such as airline-reservation desks, police departments, hospitals, schools, and businesses. Inevitably, the increasing demand for TTYs outstripped the dwindling supply of old Baudot teleprinters. New companies began developing and manufacturing compact, lightweight TTYs.

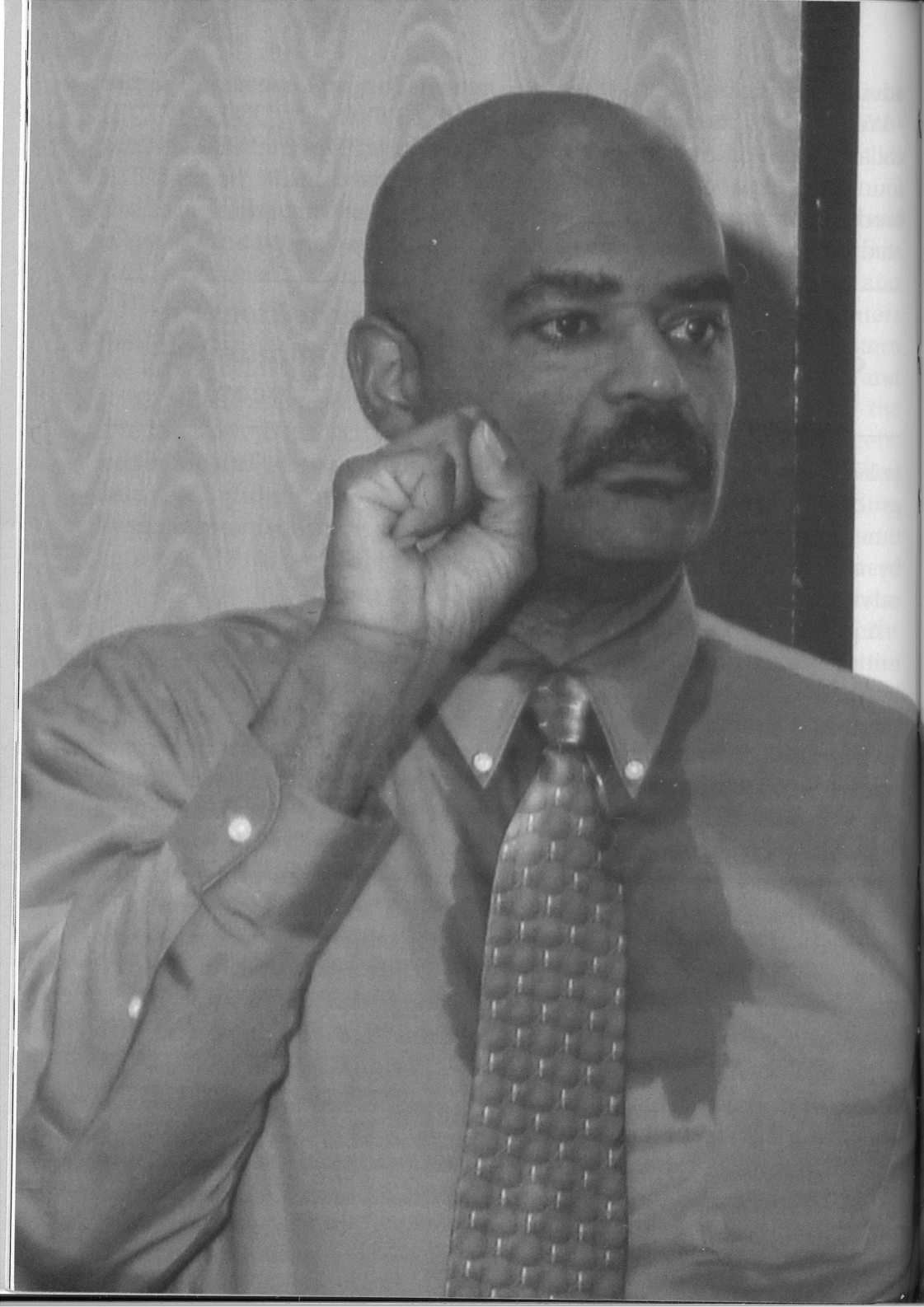
The passage of the ADA in 1990 led to a boom in the use of TTYs and relay services, which are now available in every state 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Title IV of the ADA took effect in July 1993, and the number of businesses, agencies and facilities with TTYs continues to grow.

Weitbrecht lived to see the beginning of the revolution. For his contributions to the deaf community, he received some recogntion and honors.

On May 19, 1983, he was taking an evening walk with his beloved dog, Mickey, near his home. While crossing th street, he was struck by a car, and died 12 days later without regaining consciousness.

The TTY modem revolutionized the way deaf people communicated with each other—and with the world. ■

DeafLife Photos courtesy of Dr. James C. Marsters/ Ultratec. Major sources: Harry G. Lang, **A Phone of Our Own: the Deaf Insurrection Against Ma Bell** (Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press), 2000; Matthew S. Moore and Robert F. Panara, **Great Deaf Amercans: the Second Edition** (Rochester, New York: Deaf Life Press), 1996.



Deaf Person of the Month

Donald M. Tinsley, Sr.

Community advocate

Donald M. Tinsley, Sr. is a veteran community advocate—well-known in and outside of Indiana's Deaf community. He is a respected leader—and a quiet sort, the kind of person who doesn't much care to talk about his own accomplishments. He's more comfortable discussing community or congregational matters.

An alumnus of Indiana School for the Deaf, he studied at NTID. He received his Associate's degree in Electrical Engineering Technology from Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) in December 1976. He notes, "I worked as Electronic and Engineering Technician at seven different companies for 18 years."

In his professional life, he is the Program Director of Indiana Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), and has worked with DHHS at the Indiana Government Center in Indianapolis since 1995.

He served on the Culture Inclusion Committee for the Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD) from 1993 to 1998, and chaired of the Relay Indiana Consumer Advisory Committee. He graduated from GCPD's Partners in Policymaking Academy (PIP) in 1994. "The PIP offers eight weekends of intensive training designed to educate participants to be active partners with those who make policy," he explains. "People with disabilities and family members are selected [by the GCPD]. PIP's

Giving a stirring ASL sermon at Mount Zion Apostolic Church.

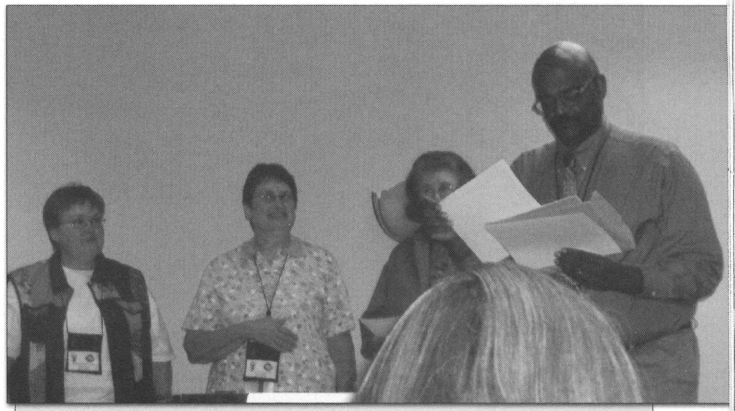
curriculum utilizes national presenters and promotes the values of integration/inclusion, and the belief that all people with disabilities should be respected and contributing members of their communities. The PIP allows us to continue training new advocates while also helping the graduate Partners enhance their skills."

Sprint launched Relay Indiana in 1993. Tinsley served on its Consumer Advisory Committee (RICAC) for the Indiana Telephone Relay Access Corporation (InTRAC) from 1993 to 1997, and chaired RICAC from 1995 to 1997.

He was elected Vice President of the Indiana Association of the Deaf (IAD) in 1999. In April 2003, he made history at the IAD's biennial conference, when he was elected its first Black President; he served for two years.

Currently, he is a member of IAD's Board of Directors, and continues to volunteer for his community. In 2005, he was recognized by the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) for his accomplishments. He also received the NAD's 2006 Robert Greenmun Award for his excellence in leadership and contributions to the IAD.

He has given numerous presentations on Deaf and Black Deaf Culture, Black Deaf History, Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and Deaf Leadership training.



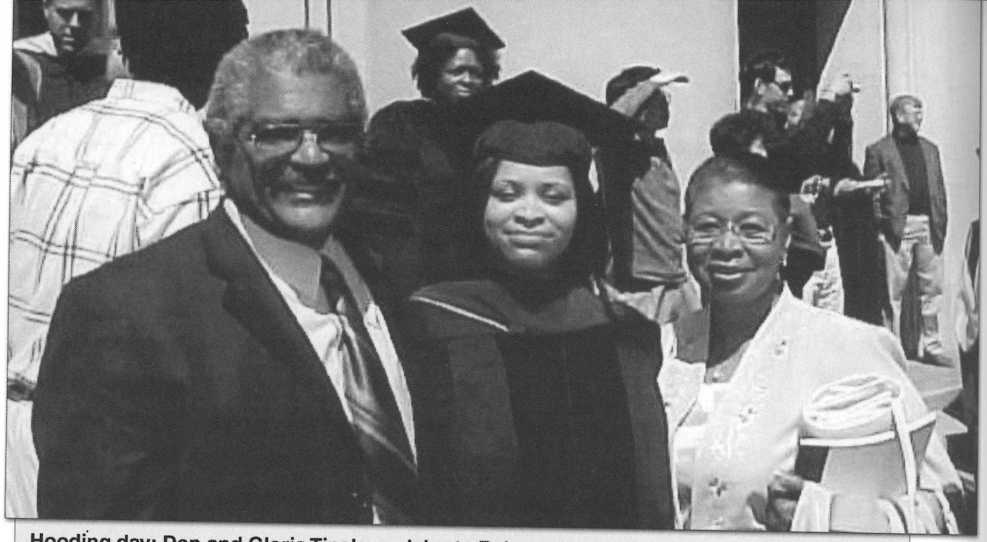
Conducting one of many workshops benefiting the community.

"I was born deaf to hearing parents in Indianapolis. I have one sister and three brothers; two are deaf. Only my mother and two brothers (one deaf and one hearing) remain alive. My lovely wife, Gloria, who is also Deaf, is from Memphis; she graduated from Tennessee School for the Deaf in 1969. We met as pen pals, and got married in 1976. We've been married 31 years. We successfully raised two hearing children: Donald, Jr., a branch manager for Rent-A-Center in Indianapolis, and Rebecca, who received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from University of Michigan in April 2006; she works at the Colgate-Palmolive Company in New Jersey. We also have two grandchildren: Destiny, 12, and Donald Tinsley III, 7.

"I entered NTID in 1969 and was there for three years, but I didn't get a diploma or certificate because NTID changed the Electro-Mechanical Engineering program, in which I was majoring, so I decided to leave NTID for IUPUI.

"I founded NBDA's Indianapolis chapter—Indianapolis Black Deaf Advocates—and served as its first president from 1994 to 1996. Our chapter grew from 25 to 45 members during my term, and it was gratifying to see it grow. I had the pleasure of working with many fine ISD alumni who

At a festive NBDA Conference banquet.



Hooding day: Don and Gloria Tinsley celebrate Rebecca's receiving her doctorate in 2006.

were motivated to serve their community. From 1999 to 2002, I served as Treasurer of NBDA. My responsibilities included preparing budgetary reports, fundraising, and processing memberships. I enjoyed the challenges of being involved in a national organization. In 1998, I chaired NBDA's 16th Biennial Conference in Indianapolis. We had some 300 attendees, including a contingent of ISD students, and it was a success. I served as Editor-in-Chief for NBDA's quarterly newsletter, **NETWORK**, from 1994 to 1997. [It's now titled **NBDA Connections**.]

I enjoyed all of it—it was fun meeting Black Deaf people from across the nation and other countries, encouraging young people, teaching others about their rights and responsibilities."

Tinsley conducted a *Pre-Conference Institute* workshop on basic anti-discrimination legislation at the *Deaf People of Color Conference* on March 29, and attended the *Conference* workshops as a participant. "The conference was very inspirational and impressive. It really is important for me to understand better about different cultures. I would encourage Deaf people of color (different races) to attend future conferences to share their experiences and learn how to empower themselves. I enjoyed the wonderful conference.

"Our shared goals are integration and inclusion. All people with disabilities should be respected and contributing members of their communities."

"I became an ordained minister in 1991 after graduating from Aenon Bible College in Indianapolis. I've been a director of Deaf Ministry at local churches. I've ministered to the Deaf Community for approximately 25 years, through teaching Sunday School classes for the Deaf, leading home Bible studies, and helping to establish Deaf ministries at several churches. Currently, I'm the Deaf Ministry leader at Mount Zion Apostolic Church in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis Black Deaf Advocates' 10th anniversary, February 2003.

"For the fourth consecutive year, we have hosted a 3-day Deaf Ministry Conference at Mount Zion, open to Deaf, hearing, and hard-of-hearing participants from the Indianapolis community. The Deaf Ministry exists to empower the Deaf with the gospel, and the workshop is designed to teach and train interpreters in a manner that demonstrates a respect for Deaf culture and language.

"It has been said that 'Deafness has been one of the most misunderstood of all disabilities.' Even today, the Deaf Community must overcome barriers, prejudice, discrimination, and misunderstanding of their language and their culture. We are committed to reaching the Deaf and hard-of-hearing with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and bridging the gap between the hearing and the Deaf world." ■

DeafLife All photos courtesy of Don Tinsley

Go to DeafPeople.com to nominate a mentor, teacher, or inspiring friend for "Deaf Person of the Month." Visit our online tile galleries, too!

DeafTrivia
fun & forgotten facts

YOU'D BE SURPRISED...
DEAF FAMILY CONNECTIONS

What famous U.S. inventor and artist had a deaf wife? What was her name?

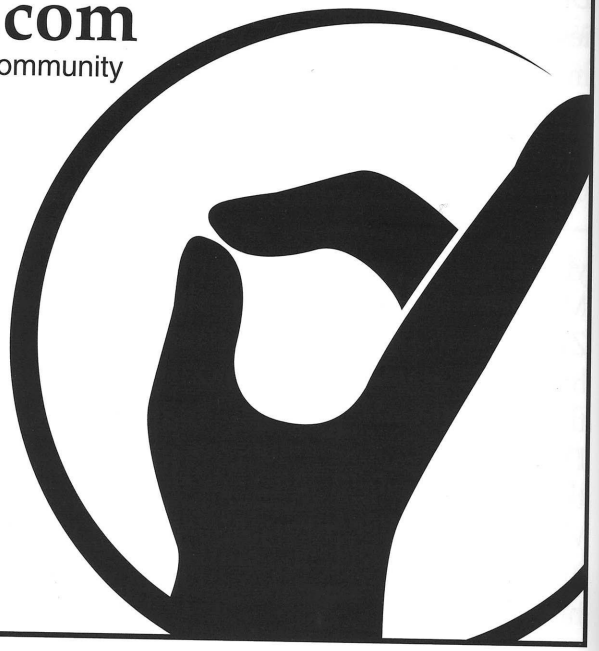
ACHIEVERS, HEROES, & PIONEERS

Who was the first deaf aviatrix?

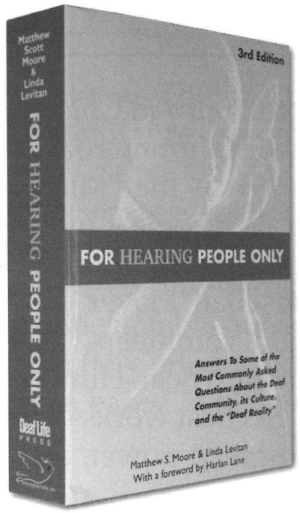
For answers, visit www.DeafTrivia.com!

www.deaf.com
Your gateway to the Deaf community

Our portal site for everyone. Fun, educational, and enlightening features. Check out our new DeafPeople.com galleries! We'll continue to expand, improve, and update our sites—part of our goal of serving the community.



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS—
WE'VE MADE YOUR JOB EASIER!


Matthew Scott Moore & Linda Levitan
3rd Edition
FOR HEARING PEOPLE ONLY
FOR HEARING PEOPLE ONLY
Answers To Some of the Most Commonly Asked Questions About the Deaf Community, its Culture, and the "Deaf Reality"
Deaf Life Press
Matthew S. Moore & Linda Levitan
With a foreword by Harlan Lane

- Easy to read
- No jargon
- Enjoyable
- Fair-minded
- Enlightening
- Up-to-date

Here, in a handy Q/A format, are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about deaf people, their community, and their language. 131 chapters; each illustrated. Easy-to-read, enjoyable introduction to a complicated subject. Written especially for those with NO background. 768 pages; paperback; includes bibliography and index. The first book of its kind. And the most popular "Deaf Studies" handbook ever!

$35.95 postpaid
ISBN 0-9634-0163-7

www.hpobook.com

Deaf Almanac

1 1860

Douglas Tilden (8/5/1935), sculptor, born in Chico, California. Deafened by scarlet fever at age 5; alumnus of California School for the Deaf-Berkeley. Known as the "Michelangelo of the West," he created some of California's most beautiful and enduring monuments, especially in and around San Francisco: "The National Game" ("Baseball Player"), "Admission Day," "California Volunteers," "Oregon Volunteers," "The Mechanics" ("Donohue Fountain"). His dramatic "Bear Hunt" is a beloved fixture of the CSD-Fremont campus. His best works—mostly in bronze—unite graceful lyricism, classical dignity, power, and robust realism.

5 1809

Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard (d. 4/27/1889), U.S. scientist, teacher, writer, and administrator, born in Sheffield, Massachusetts. He began losing his hearing before graduating from Yale in 1828. Acquiring fluency in sign language, he taught at the Hartford Asylum and Fanwood at the beginning of his career. As President of Columbia College (now University) from 1863 to 1888, he helped transform it into an academic powerhouse. Barnard College, Columbia's college for women, was established upon his death. He predated Dr. I. King Jordan as the first deaf college president by more than a century.

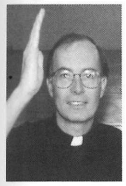
5 1868

Edward Miner Gallaudet convened a meeting of all principals of schools for the deaf at the Kendall Green campus. He proposed that the combined method be adopted nationwide for educating deaf students. His goals: improving the literacy of deaf students, and counteracting the growing power and influence of the oralists.

May

Dates to remember from our Deaf History

7 1977



Father Thomas Coughlin (b. 5/22/1947) was ordained in Baltimore, becoming the nation's first Deaf Catholic priest. A native of Malone, New York; born deaf; alumnus of St. Mary's School for the Deaf; B.A. in English, Gallaudet College; M.A. in Religious Studies, Catholic University of America. He co-founded Camp Mark Seven (Old Forge, New York), and has done notable outreach to Catholic Deaf youth. He recently established a new religious order, Dominican Missionaries for the Deaf Apostolate, based in Hayward, California.

12 1898

Olaf Hassel (d. 8/15/1972), Norwegian astronomer, born in Upper Sandsvaer. Deafened in infancy, he attended Christiana Public School for the Deaf in Oslo. He began his distinguished career as a hobby, using secondhand equipment. He discovered *Comet Jurlof-Achmarof-Hassel* on April 16, 1939, and on March 7, 1960, *Nova Hercules 1960 (Hassel)*. He insisted that his Deaf wife, Marie, deserved main credit for the nova's discovery, since she had woken him 10 minutes earlier than usual. A kind, warm-hearted man, he shared his knowledge of astronomy with the Deaf community. To a local clergyman for the Deaf community who came to see him shortly before he died, he signed, "When I die, I shall ask the Almighty God to make me a star that will twinkle for you."

18 1850

Oliver Heaviside (d. 2/3/1925), legendary British electrical engineer, mathematician, and physicist, born in the slum of Camden Town, London. Scarlet fever left him partially deaf as a child; his deafness grew progressively more severe, and he was often reclusive. His formal schooling ended at age

16; he initially trained as a telegrapher. Shy and unsociable, he could have, as a collateral descendant noted, "an impish sense of humor." His main contributions (of many) were in the fields of vector analysis, operational calculus, and electro-magnetic waves. He simplified Maxwell's 20 equations in 20 variables. Although they're known as "Maxwell's equations," they're really "Heavside's equations." In 1902, he correctly predicted the existence of the ionosphere (a.k.a. the "Kennelly-Heaviside layer"). His last 25 years were spent in bitter seclusion at Torquay; he died of prostate cancer.

1862 23

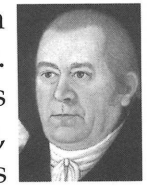
William Ellsworth "Dummy" Hoy (d. 12/15/1961), pioneer major-leaguer, born in Houcktown, Ohio, about 50 miles south of Toledo. Early-deafened, probably by spinal meningitis. Alumnus of Ohio School for the Deaf, the first such school to establish baseball. He worked as a cobbler until he joined the Oshkosh Club in 1886—his start in professional baseball. During his stint with the Washington Senators, he became the first outfielder to throw out three baserunners at home plate in a single game. Small, speedy, and sturdy, he was a fine center-fielder for several teams, including the Louisville Colonels, Chicago White Sox, and Cincinnati Reds. He taught his teammates fingerspelling and signing, and, utilizing his old Deaf-team signals, is credited with having brought umpires' signals (safe, out, strike, ball) into major-league baseball—the same signals now used throughout the world.

29 1886

Harold J. Conn (d. 11/10/1975), U.S. bacteriologist, born in Connecticut. He began losing his hearing at age 11, and, as an undergraduate at Wesleyan College (now University) in Middletown, became interested in the new fields of agricultural and soil bacteriology. Af-

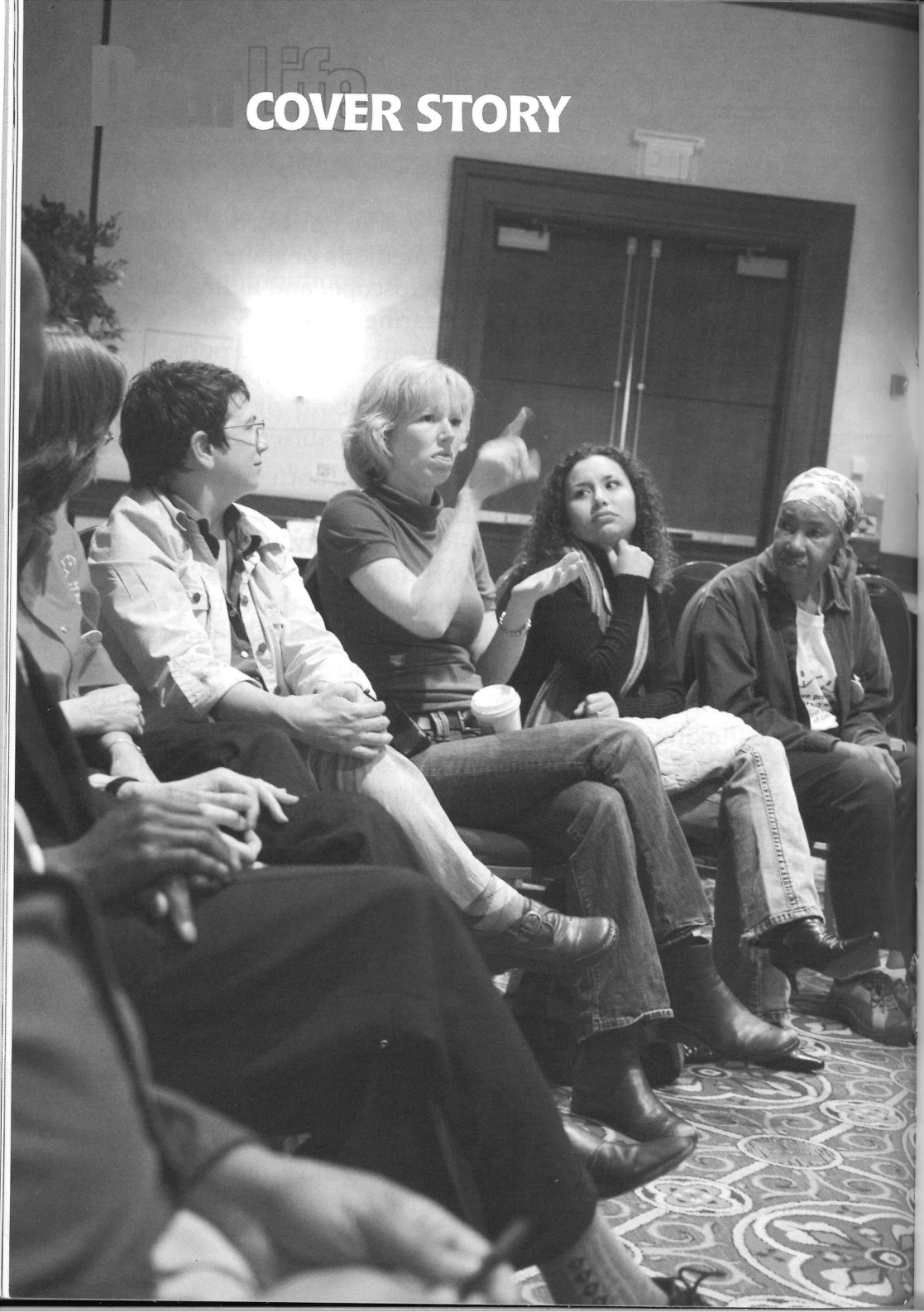
ter graduating with highest honors, he worked at Cornell, publishing his findings, developing improved methods of staining bacteria to increase their visibility under the microscope, and aiding in their classification. Unable to benefit from hearing aids or TV, he took up painting later in life, but continued to research, edit, and publish into his seventies.

1766 30



John Brewster, Jr. (d. 8/13/1854), U.S. folk artist, born into a distinguished and wealthy family in Hampton, Connecticut. Now considered one of the finest post-Revolutionary limners (itinerant portraitists), he sold his work for modest sums, but evidently earned a more prosperous living than his physician brother. (There are no known portraits or self-portraits of Brewster; the detail at right is from an early double portrait of his father and stepmother.) Between 1795 and 1834, he painted approximately 250 portraits, taking a 3-year sabbatical to attend the newly-opened Hartford Asylum—at age 51, by far the oldest in his class of seven. His striking, well-composed, austere, and hauntingly beautiful portraits of well-to-do New England relatives, patrons, spouses, and children, now command high prices in today's art market—when they can be found. Most are in prestigious museum collections.

Major sources: Jack R. Gannon, **Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America** (1980); Harry G. Lang, **Silence of the Spheres: the Deaf Experience in the History of Science** (1994); Harry G. Lang and Bonnie Meath-Lang, **Deaf Persons in the Arts and Sciences: a Biographical Dictionary** (1995); Matthew S. Moore and Robert F. Panara, **Great Deaf Americans: the Second Edition** (1996). **Photo credits:** Douglas Tilden—California School for the Deaf, Fremont. E. M. Gallaudet—Library of Congress/Brady-Handy Photograph Collection. Father Thomas Coughlin—James C. Baca. Olaf Hassel—Rune Anda. Oliver Heaviside—Portrait by Frances Hodge, courtesy of Alan Heather. William E. "Dummy" Hoy (*circa* 1896)—Collection of MSM Productions, Ltd. John Brewster, Sr.—detail of "Dr. John and Mrs. (Ruth Avery) Brewster," 1795-1800, Collection of Old Sturbridge Village.



UNITED WE PREVAIL—IN DIVERSITY WE THRIVE

Deaf People of Color

Shared Wisdom and High Energy

The first national *Deaf People of Color Conference* makes history

The first national *Deaf People of Color Conference* was held at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown from Thursday, March 29, to Sunday, April 1—and it was a triumphant success. 155 attendees from across the nation participated in workshops, socialized, networked, and established new friendships.

This first-of-its-kind conference focused on the educational, legal, leadership, and communal concerns and challenges faced by Deaf people of color—African-American, American Indian, Latino/Hispanic, Asian-American, biracial, and multiracial—all of whom have traditionally been under-represented, even invisible, constituencies. There was an emphasis on attitudes—bias, stereotypes, prejudices, and myths. The *Conference* was open to people of all colors—everyone welcome. Workshops were repeated so that all attendees could benefit from each one.

The adventure begins

The story of the first national *Deaf People of Color Conference* began in early June 2005. Matthew S. Moore, President of MSM Productions, Ltd. (which also publishes **DEAF LIFE** and DEaf Life Press books) was running the *ASL 4 US Midwestern Conference: Teach All Kids ASL*, at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, in conjunction with the Willard Chapter of American Sign Language Teachers Association. *ASL 4 Us* (June 4-6, 2005) was Moore's first independent conference. He had already coordinated several national conferences for ASLTA, including two National Professional Development conferences, the third being held in Las Vegas five months after *ASL 4 Us*.

Laurene Simms, Director of Gallaudet University's Deaf Education Program, a professor and authority on bilingual ASL/English education, and a noted African-American Deaf advocate, was at *ASL 4 Us*. She appreciated the way it was being run, and told Moore, an old friend, that she wanted to convene a conference focusing on the concerns of Deaf people of color, one that would include representatives

from each national organization representing Deaf people of color. One goal was to provide support and networking—smaller, weaker organizations banding together with larger, stronger ones to form a unified front, a coalition that was more powerful than individual organizations could be. Moore agreed that it was a great idea. This conference would be the first of its kind in history.

The *Conference* was the culmination of over a year of planning. It was, of course, a well-organized team effort, a collaboration between Matthew S. Moore and his staff, Dr. Simms, and the *ad hoc* National Coalition of Deaf People of Color, with the assistance of local volunteers and the Marriott's staff. Moore became Conference Coordinator. Dr. Simms became Program Coordinator and official liaison between Moore's company and the Coalition, which consisted of two representatives from each national organization representing Deaf people of color. The *Conference* was hosted by the Coalition. Members were:

- ♦ National Black Deaf Advocates (African-Americans): Gerald Miller (President Thomas Samuels and Secretary Cory Parker) and Jerry Webster
- ♦ National Asian Deaf Congress (Asian-Americans): Steven Chough and Thuan Thi Nguyen; Janice A. Nishimura (Interpreter)
- ♦ Intertribal Deaf Council (American Indians): Reba Euline and Judy C. Stout
- ♦ National Hispanic Council of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Latinos/Hispanics): Elvia Guillermo and Leticia Arellano
- ♦ National Alliance of Black Interpreters (African-American interpreters): Barbara Hunt and Jeff Bowden
- ♦ Mano o Mano (Hispanic/Latinos interpreters): Tony Barranza and Gerardo Castillo
- ♦ American Society for Deaf Children (parents of color): Brenda Perrodin

Coalition members voted on their favorite slogan and logo design from several possibilities submitted by Moore. Once the Coalition approved the logo, the MSM team set up the *Conference* Website and posted a call for workshop presentations. Dr. Simms met regularly with Coalition members, who vetted the proposals and chose the presenters. They also chose the cast of performers for the Banquet Gala. The Website was updated regularly, as plans developed, a schedule posted and filled in, and an online-registration form activated. It was multi-lingual. Most of the text, including Dr. Simms' message to visitors, was also posted in Spanish, and she had an ASL video clip.

Moore oversaw all details of

the planning and preparations done at his office. He met with Dr. Simms and the Coalition at Gallaudet University, and several times with the Indy Marriott's event planners, chose menus, worked out the logistical details, arranged for interpreters for hearing attendees, devised a schedule that enabled attendees to participate in all of the workshops, designed promotional booklets, program books, personalized badges and passports, keycards, certificates of participation, signage, souvenir T-shirts, and registrants' kits. (Two sets of printed materials had to be prepared, for the *Pre-Conference Institute* and for the *Conference*.) He also made arrangements for CEUs (Continuing Education Units) and CMPs (Certification Maintenance Program), enhancing the value of the *Pre-Conference Institute* and *Conference* for attendees seeking credit for their ASLTA or RID certifications.

This conference, like previous conferences coordinated by MSM Productions, Ltd., bore the stamp of Moore's meticulous planning and commitment to quality. He and his team devoted many long hours of planning and preparation to making the *Conference* a success. There was much work to do—time-consuming, tedious, but absolutely essential tasks such as printing, assembling, folding, saddlewiring, and trimming printed materials. Each workshop required a separate set of evaluation forms. Almost everything, with the exception of the imprinted T-shirts, embroidered shirts, oversized signage, and a few other items, was produced in the office. As the date drew near, work continued day and night.

Coalition members distributed the promotional booklets and grapevined. With help from Dr. Simms, Moore lined up sponsors, program-book advertisers, and vendors—all the while keeping in close contact with her, via E-mail and iSight.

Indianapolis: the starting line

Monday, March 26

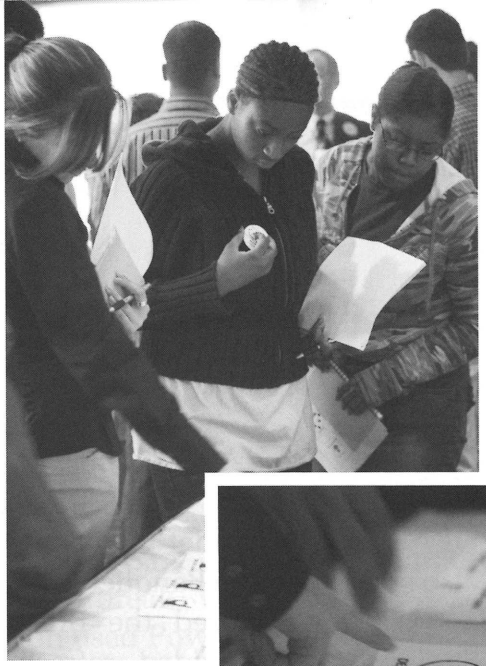
The MSM crew had already shipped some items to the hotel. The rest was carefully packed in the company van, and driven to Indianapolis, about a 10-hour drive from Rochester.

Tuesday, March 27

Moore had his final meeting with the Indy Marriott's event planners to review plans. His 7th-floor suite was used as an impromptu center of operations. The crew unloaded supplies and assembled registrants' kits; the cluster of black-and-charcoal slingbags looked like a garden of big black petals.

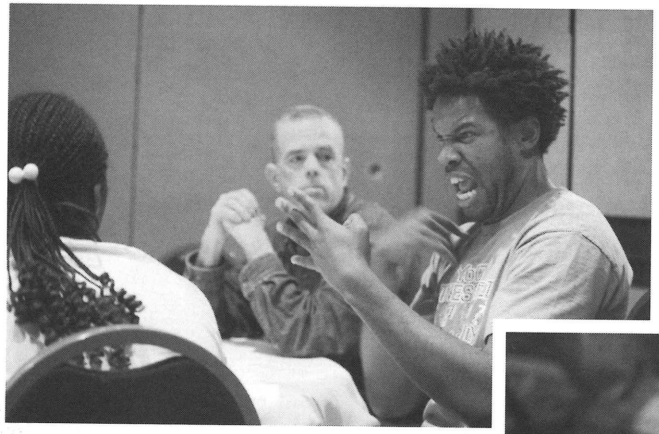
Wednesday, March 28

After kits for each registrant were assembled, they were carted down to the second floor, where all *Conference* sessions were to be held, unloaded behind the Registration Desk, and organized. The crew set up their laptops, printer, and supplies. All was now ready. The first registrants began arriving and checking in that evening.



Thanks to those who made it possible

The *Conference* was sponsored by CSD (Communication Service for the Deaf), Relay Indiana/Sprint, IP-Relay/Verizon, Sorenson Communications, National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers/National Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University (NCIEC), NTID/RIT, Gallaudet University and its Department of Education, Gallaudet Leadership Institute, Vincennes University, and MSM Productions, Ltd./**DEAF LIFE**/



Images from *Pre-Conference* workshops: making a point, pondering an ADA case, discussing a situation, and compiling a list.

DEAF.com. Gallaudet University also sponsored the Banquet Gala, and CSD sponsored the Break Stations that provided refreshments between the two morning and two afternoon sessions on Friday and Saturday. Gallaudet University Regional Center at Johnson County Community College (Overland Park, Kansas) sponsored the Saturday-evening Panel/Round Table session.

Vendors and exhibitors, in addition to the sponsors, included the Coalition's member organizations, who set up historical and informational tables in the nearby Denver Room; CSDVRS; Gallaudet University's departments of Admissions, Academic Technology, and Social Work; Visual Language Interpreting (VLI); Connections for Deaf Citizens; and Hamilton Relay.

Pre-Conference Institute

Thursday, March 29

An all-day *Pre-Conference Institute* was held on Thursday, March 29, featuring four intensive 2-hour workshops (training sessions) focusing on leadership and empowerment, organizational development, and legal aspects of Deaf rights. These were repeated so that all attendees could participate in all four workshops.

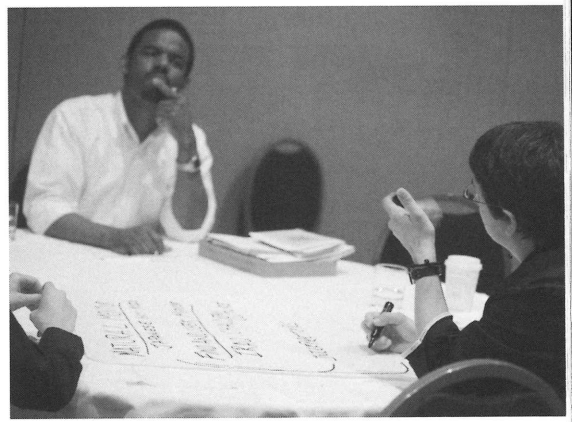
Before the sessions began, Moore distributed embroidered red cotton-twill shirts to the local volunteer crew, and briefed them on their responsibilities. They collected and stamped passports to record workshop attendance, and also distributed and collected evaluation forms for each workshop. They worked at tables set up outside the session rooms. Stamped passports were laid out alphabetically at each table to be picked up and taken to the next session.

The MSM crew, staffing the Registration Desk, sported vivid teal shirts (as did Coalition members). Presenters received white shirts. The teal shirts, in particular, made quite an impression on a number of attendees, who wanted to purchase one for themselves! (Orders could be placed at the Registration Desk.)

Moore supervised the action. He checked with the hotel staff, his crew, volunteers, vendors, presenters, and attendees, and, in general, made sure that everything was running smoothly.

Special thanks are due to Ann Reifel of Vincennes University, who assisted with loaned equipment, such as PowerPoint projectors, and technical setups—an indispensable part of the *Conference*.

The four *Pre-Conference* sessions began at 8 a.m. and ended at 5:30 p.m., with a 90-minute lunch break. Virtually every session used PowerPoint projections and poster-sized Post-It pads on easels, and distributed printed handouts. Each workshop had around 24 to 35 participants at a time. Many used breakouts (dividing the group into smaller groups, each group focusing on a specific task or assignment).

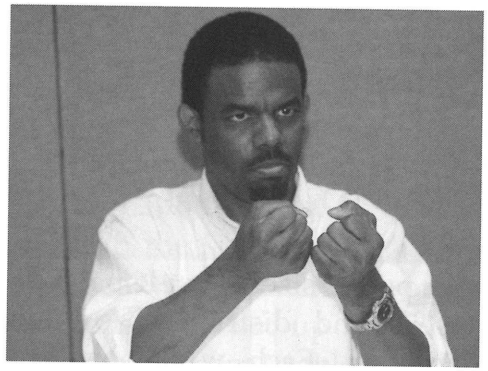


A buffet deli-style lunch was included in the *Pre-Conference* pack-

age, and it was, in characteristic Indy Marriott style, done with style.

David Geeslin, Superintendent of Indiana School for the Deaf, participated in the *Pre-Conference Institute*, along with a contingent of ISD high-schoolers. There were 119 participants in all—well over the original goal of 100.

The following brief, sketchy summaries cannot convey the excitement of the workshops, the dynamism and warmth of the presenters, the power of their signing, nor the energy that flowed between presenters and participants.



Tim Albert, "Leadership and Empowerment for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students"

A native of New Orleans, Tim Albert earned his Bachelor's and Master of Social Work degrees from Gallaudet University and an Associate of Applied Science in Photography from NTID. He has extensive experience in organizational leadership. He's been Director of NBDA's Youth Empowerment Summit (YES) since 1999. He is currently a social worker at Georgia School for the Deaf.

The ebullient Albert focused on three main topics: *cultural competence, empowerment,* and *leadership. Cultural competence,* a fairly new arrival to the social-sciences and educational vocabularies, is one's ability to understand and feel comfortable with other people's cultures. *Empowerment* is taking action to improve our life situation. *Leadership* is a person's influencing a group to help it achieve its goals. He noted the success of the NBDA's YES—and mentioned an ironic encounter with a stranger who didn't believe that Albert could be a school social worker because he's black and deaf.

Participants discussed race and negative influences, and developed, and shared, a list of persons of color whom they admired.

Pre-Conference sessions had a high degree of interaction between presenters and participants. The high-school students from ISD participated actively—the signing was like a whirlwind!

Judy C. Stout, "Tools for Training and Organizational Development for Deaf Consumer Leaders of Color"

(See page 46 for a capsule biography.)

First, some ground rules were laid down (and these could apply to all other workshops too): Respect each other, listen to each other; be open-minded and have a warm heart; support each other in the discussion process; share your views and comments. Then came the overview of the agenda: challenging the process by searching for opportunities to creatively improve the organization, experimenting and taking risks, working as part of a team, setting an example, maintaining a warm heart, fostering team efforts, and bonding.

Leaders take risks and accept disappointments as learning opportunities. A quote from Henry Ford: "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently."

Breakouts worked to find solutions to two situations: one balancing an organization's being required to share information with the public while maintaining members' privacy, and the other, how to prevent the kind of leadership void that occurred when an organization's president retired and departed without leaving any plans or orientation materials for his successor.

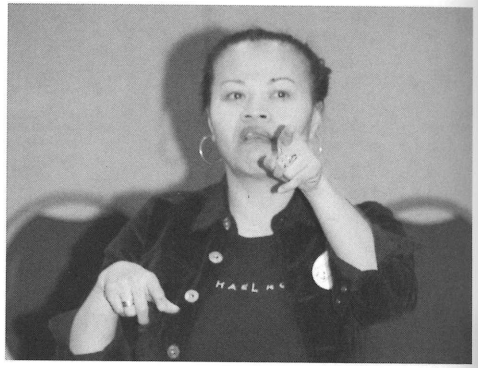
Donald Tinsley, "ADA, IDEA, and More: the Legal Aspects and Rights of Deaf People of Color"

An alumnus of IUPUI (with An Associate's degree in Electrical Engineering), Don Tinsley is Program Director of Indiana Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, and the founder and past president of Indianapolis Black Deaf Advocates. In 2003, he became Indiana Association of the

Deaf's first black president.

This workshop provided insight into the varieties of discrimination and the legal recourses we have to combat it. Tinsley, a veteran advocate, summarized and compared the main provisions of three key pieces of anti-discrimination legislation: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, amended in 1997), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, noting what was and wasn't covered, services provided, enforcement, and the grievance process.

Attendees were divided into breakouts, and each was given a synopsis of a different case involving discrimination (and these all appeared to be based on real-life situations): hospitals and doctors refusing to provide sign interpreters, patients receiving bills for interpreters, schools refusing to provide interpreters for deaf students, claiming that they're already making reasonable accommodations, deaf students shut out from courses, and so forth. Several groups dramatized their situations, and the impromptu performances were enthusiastically received.



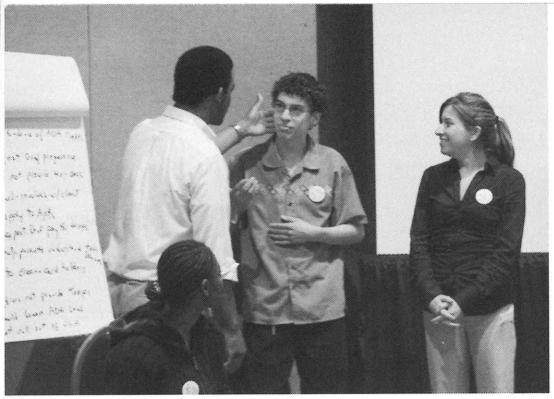
Thuan Thi Nguyen, "Establishing a Successful Minority Mentoring Program"

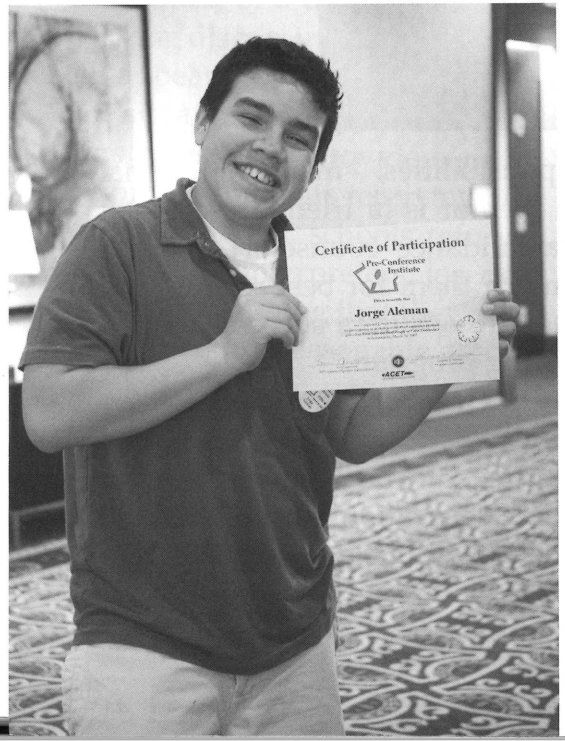
A native of Vietnam, Nguyen has had a remarkable career. She came to the United States as a 10-year-old without verbal, written, or signed language. She received her B.A. in Deaf Studies from Gallaudet University in 2000, and her Master's in Deafness Rehabilitation Counseling in 2002. She now works as Mentoring and Minority Academic Support Programs Coordinator at the Center for Academic Programs and Student Services (CAPSS) at Gallaudet University.

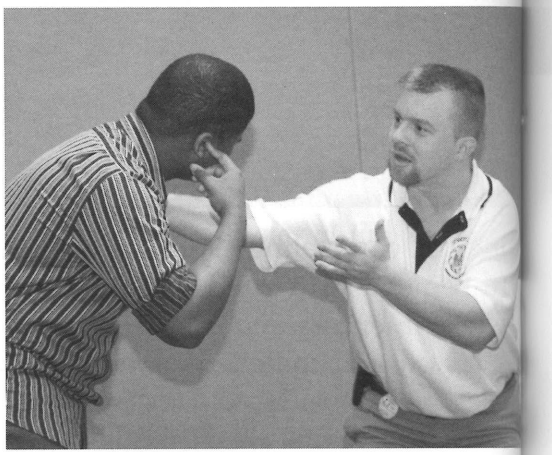
Mentoring can and does make a tremendous difference in our lives. No, it's not just for young folks, or members of ethnic and racial minorities. *All* of us need mentors, and we can also *be* mentors. There are two types of mentoring: natural (through friendship, teaching, coaching, or counseling) and planned (through a structured program in which mentors and mentees and selected and matched). We were asked to consider our "circle of influence": ourselves, friends and family, roommates, classmates, organization or team members; co-workers—and this was visualized as concentric circles rippling outward. Nguyen discussed what mentors do, how they spend time with mentees, their roles and responsibilities, matching, what a mentor is (a friend) and is not (a guidance counselor), how to match them for best results, and how to ensure a successful mentoring program.

Scenes from Conference workshops—watching attentively (**right**) and compiling an "attribute" list (**below**) as a bias-awareness exercise. There was a high degree of interaction, cooperation, and respect among participants.

On Thursday afternoon, *Conference* registration was opened, and participants began queuing up at the Registration Desk to receive their passports and kits. The desk staffers were busy until late at night.







Clockwise from top left: Tim Albert instructs three ISD students in a role-playing scenario; SooHyn Tak discusses diversity in the workforce; two participants in Tim Albert's workshop enact another scenario; Linda Levitan, reporting for **DEAF LIFE**, participates in the dialogue and takes notes; an ISD student proudly displays his Certificate of Participation; two members MSM Productions' Registration Desk staff in a rare quiet moment, waiting for participants to pick up their certificates. David D. Long, Registration Coordinator (left), is assisted by Brenda Butler.

Two *very* busy days

Friday, March 30

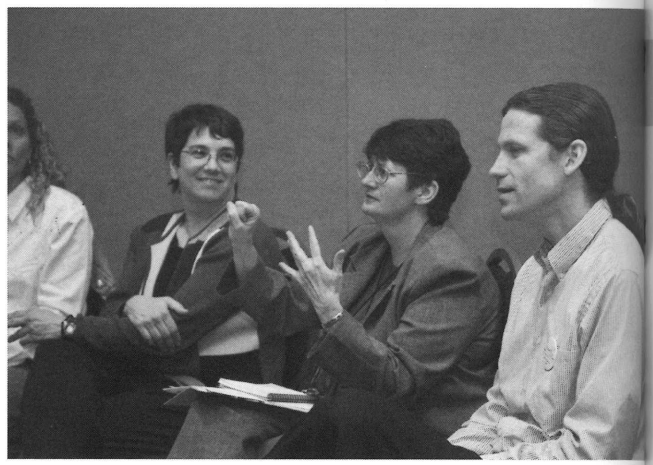
Breakfast was served at 7 a.m. in the Marriott Ballroom. My roommate, Sandy McLennon, Professor in Gallaudet's Department of Physical Education and Recreation, had just picked up her registrant's kit, an imprinted black-and-charcoal slingbag with a personalized tag, containing a program book, notebook, and other goodies, and was examining it. "Oh, this is nice, " she signed to a neighbor at our table. "I like it!"

The *Conference* opened with a plenary session. Shortly before 8, Matthew S. Moore took the podium and addressed the group, requesting a moment of silence in memory of all the deaf people of color who, denied justice, had died or endured abuse. He briefed attendees on the correct procedures with their passports and evaluation forms, and announced a few changes that had been made to the program since the program books were printed.

Dr. Simms began her keynote address, "A Braided Dream of Color: Yours, Mine, and Ours," by holding up a souvenir T-shirt—the same as all attendees received in their kits—and noting the screenprinted logos of the *Conference* sponsors on the back, gratefully acknowledging their support, and explained the significance of the "dancing matchsticks" *Conference* logo on the front, and what the Coalition was. She named its members and which organizations they represented.

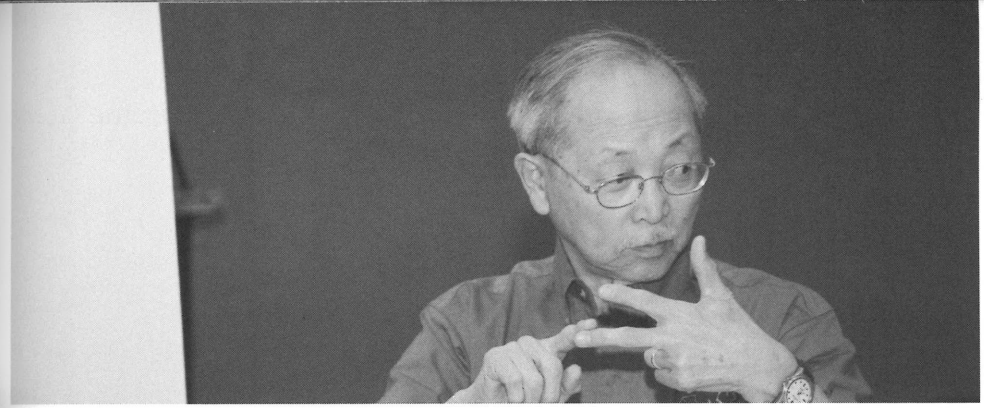
She displayed a bar chart showing a decrease in the number of white deaf school-age children with a corresponding increase in the number of deaf schoolchildren of color. "Numerous children and youths are still under-represented, under-educated, and underserved in a variety of

the landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954. Next steps: replacing the old paradigm ("We want you to work with us") with the new paradigm ("Let us work together, shoulder to shoulder"). She ended with an exhortation to "take an occasional risk"—symbolized by a Photoshop cartoon of a mouse wearing a tiny red safety helmet, bravely approaching a cheese-baited mousetrap.



fields, such as education, counseling, and medical care." She asked us to think about why we were here and what we hoped to gain from the experience—to network, improve our understanding of racism and partnerships in the Deaf community, to overcome lack of confidence, to celebrate and embrace our true selves, cherish diversity, and inspire young Deaf people of color to take risks. She shared a favorite quote from popular motivational author Ben Sweetland: "We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own." And an anonymous quote: "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel." She touched on the history of the Civil Rights Movement,

The following pages highlight the eight workshops presented on Friday and Saturday. Two 2-hour workshops were presented in the morning, and two in the afternoon, with 15-minute breaks (and refreshments) between the morning and afternoon sessions.



Steven Chough

"Stand Up and Be Seen!"

The first deaf person in the U.S. to earn a Master's degree in Social Work University of Denver), Steven Chough, a native of South Korea, also holds a doctorate in Social Planning/Policy in the mental-health field from Columbia University. He serves as an adjunct professor at Gallaudet and George Washington universities.

Dr. Chough started out, with wry humor, by apologizing for his "old teacher's habits." Attendees were encouraged to move up front. His workshop focused on nonverbal messages—body language, assertiveness, self-esteem. Using cartoons, he discussed two major negative, destructive personality (or coping) traits—passivity and aggression—then brought in a third, and positive, approach—assertiveness. He showed a cartoon of a woman approaching the boss's office, drooping, fearful, shoulders glumly hunched. He contrasted that with a cartoon showing a woman in the same situation, but with confident body language. Which one, he asked, was more likely to get the raise? He noted the importance of facial expressions and posture. He suggested ways to say "No!" without feeling guilty, and complaining in a positive way that is likely to yield a positive outcome. Formula for Assertiveness: Respect for other people + Respect for yourself + Specificity.

Role-playing, starring recruits from the audience in impromptu "skits," followed. One scenario: in a favorite Korean restaurant, you are seated next to a cigar smoker. You're sensitive, even allergic, to smoke. How do you handle the situation? A kitchen-cleanup scenario was also enacted. Coming home to a messy kitchen, what would you say to ensure immediate action? We learned some useful tips about standing up for our legitimate rights.

Judy C. Stout

"Developing and Maintaining a Successful Network"

A Native American (Lumbee tribe), Judy Stout was raised in Pembroke, North Carolina, works as a Family Educator at MSSD, and is a political activist for Maryland's Deaf/hard-of-hearing community.

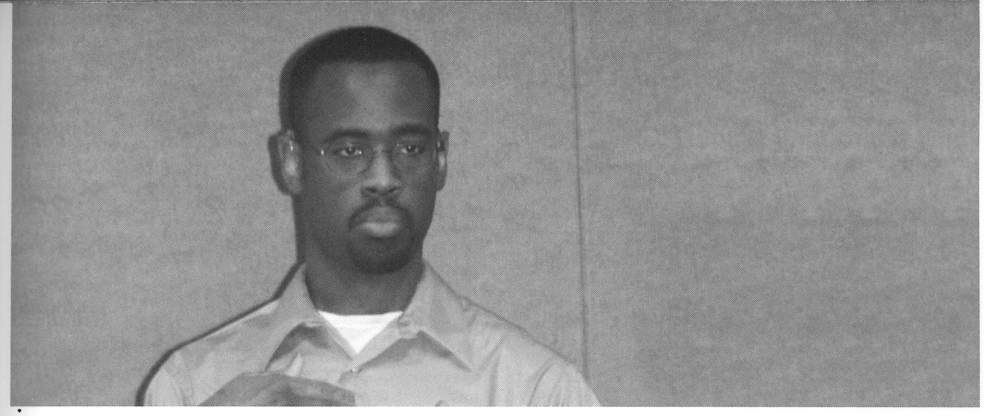
Stout focused on the importance of networking as an indispensable personal, organizational, social, and political tool, and gave us tips on how to build and refine our networking skills. Her definition: "Networking is an organized collection of your personal contacts and their networks." Networking is "finding fast whom you need, to get what you need in any given situation," and it's "helping others do the same." It's also "a relationship formed to satisfy the needs of all its members."

She noted the five principles of networking (relationships: a fundamental need; people tend to do what's expected of them; they tend to associate with others like themselves; repeated networking encourages cooperation; it's a small world.

She cited four key elements in building a network: R.I.S.K.—Reciprocity, Interdependency, Sharing, and Keeping at it. She diagrammed concentric circles to narrow down the field from "everyone" to determining who, of our entire circle of acquaintances, will make an effective long-term network partner.

Examples of her teachings: "When doing advocacy networking, make sure you are delivering your message. If your strong point is your passion for the cause, show the passion. If your strong point is talking statistics, talk statistics. Do not try and speak someone else's message—be yourself!" "What happens with people exchange dollar bills? Each of you have one dollar. What happens when two people exchange networks? Each of you now have two networks!"

The beauty of networks is that they can extend into infinity—an exciting prospect!



Joseph C. Hill

"Language Attitudes Toward Signing Types in the American Deaf Community"

A native of Cincinnati, Joseph Hill holds a B.A. in Systems Analysis from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and his Master's in ASL Linguistics from Gallaudet University; he is pursuing his doctorate there.

This workshop, which employed a more technical (linguistic) vocabulary than the others, explored the complex and nuanced interrelationships between signing and social perceptions of the signer. Age, race, gender, occupation, region, and schooling all influence a person's signing style, and the way they are perceived by others. Hill noted various linguistic principles: phonology (handshape), morphology (classifiers, use of space, eye movement), lexical (word choice), syntax (word order), and performance (fluency). He showed several video clips of young-adult signers, asking us to pay particular attention to their style of signing. He proceeded to discuss mutually unintelligible spoken languages, creoles, pidgins, and dialects (including "Spanglish," Jamaican Creole, and Tok Pisin), and how code-switching could apply to signed languages (ASL *versus* PSE, for example).

The funniest segment was Hill's showing us a hypothetical statement made by a physician to a patient and nurse, in distinctly nonstandard English: *Hey, how's it goin'? Rotten break, huh? Ya got a pain in da' noggin? Don't sweat it. I'm gonna fix ya up. Hey, nois! Ovah here! Bring me dat whatchamacallit. How da hell am I gonna take care of ya [if I can't find it]? Dat's a goil!* This was contrasted to the kind of English one might reasonably expect from a doctor: *Hello. How are you feeling? I understand that you have a pain in your head. I will need to find the exact cause of your headache before I treat it. Nurse? Will you get the towels ready for me? Thank you.*

Francisca Rangel

"The Inner Lives of Deaf Latinos Migrant Farmworkers"

Rangel, the daughter of migrant farmworkers, grew up in Mission, Texas, and put in a stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador. She received her Master's in Deaf Education from Gallaudet University. She is ASL and Deaf Studies Coordinator at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, and ASL & English Bilingual Professional Development Mentor in Early Childhood Education to Team 1-2-3 at KDES.

Rangel discussed her scholarly research on Deaf Latino farmworkers in several states, and how they experience and interpret their lives. She screened snapshots, and ASL videos of first-person narratives.

In "Working with Spearmint," Alfonzo Cruz describes his toughest job: harvesting spearmint—tormentingly itchy work. He learned how to protect himself before going out: after slathering aloe vera over his arms and legs, he pulled his socks over his pant-legs, then fastened them tight with string.

In "Tragedy in Laredo," José G. Reyes recounts a car accident in which his father was killed on impact. José, his mother, and his sister were hospitalized for 6 weeks, then returned home to Roma, Texas.

"Rattlesnake Meal," told by San Juanita de Lopez, describes her field experiences in north Texas, seeing small snakes and occasionally rattlesnakes. Her father would kill and bag them, taking them home for the family to eat.

Rangel noted the "wealth of undocumented stories" of Deaf Latinos, the need to break free from stereotypes, and to do more research studies.

Carla Garcia

"Are You a Victim of White Privilege, Hearing Privilege, or Both?"

Garcia earned her B.A. in Child Development at Gallaudet University, and her M.A. in Bilingual and Bicultural Education at University of Arizona. She currently works as a Multicultural Specialist at her alma mater, New Mexico School for the Deaf.

After being divided into breakouts, we had a lively small-group discussion of what "privilege" meant, and the most accurate way of signing it. Garcia's definition: "White privilege is a term denoting the rights, advantages, exemptions, or immunity enjoyed by white persons in Western countries beyond what is commonly experienced by nonwhites in these nations." The term was coined by Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. Garcia's discussion also touched on Shelby Steele's 2006 book **White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era**, an essay on the complementary cults of black victimhood and white guilt, the failure of affirmative action, and other "taboo" topics.

"Hearing privilege" and "audism" were likewise discussed. Garcia's definition: "Audism is a term used to describe discrimination or stereotypes against deaf or hard-of-hearing people; for example, by assuming that the cultural ways of hearing people are preferable or superior to those of Deaf or signing culture, or that deaf people are somehow less capable than hearing people." The thought-provoking session closed with a quote from the Dalai Lama: "Real change is in the heart, but in modern education there is not sufficient talk about compassion. Through education, through training the mind and using intelligence, we can see the value of compassion and the harmfulness of anger and hatred."

Mary Henry Lightfoot

"Video Relay Service: Interpreting Tools for Effective Dialogue with Culturally Sensitive Content"

A veteran interpreter, interpreter trainer, and mentor, Lightfoot teaches at Gallaudet University, and currently chairs RID's Video Interpreting Committee.

Telecommunications and interpreting options for Deaf people have been dramatically increasing during the past few years. This workshop focused on VRS, exploring ways for Deaf people of color to collaborate and partner with RID's Video Interpreting Committee in addressing needs in the Video Relay Service/Video Remote Interpreting environments.

First came the breakouts. Lightfoot instructed us: "Turn to your neighbor. Introduce yourself. Who are you culturally? What are your beliefs? What are your values? What are your habits or customs? What city are you from, or what part of the U.S. are you from?" After we'd gotten introduced, she explained that VRS is a form of TRS (telecommunications-relay service), but wasn't (yet) mandated by the government, although it's overseen by the FCC. VRS operates 24/7 and is free to the caller. Spanish and ASL services are offered. Its goal is to provide federal telecommunications equality. Each VR provider has interpreters working in call centers across the nation. Our rights were enumerated: confidentiality, qualified interpreters, use of any VR provider. "A qualified interpreter must be able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary."

FCC, by the way, still uses the phrase "persons with hearing disabilities" instead of "deaf and HoH persons." (Oh, well.) We were encouraged to discuss and communicate our needs—clarity of signs, awareness of vocabulary, and cultural competence.

SooHyun Tak

"Are Nice People Like Us Racially Biased?"

A native of South Korea, SooHyun Tak earned her Master's in Mental Health Counseling from Gallaudet University. She has been in the counseling field for over 10 years, and has given many presentations on topics such as bias, diversity, and combating racism. She is currently Manager of Social Services and Advocacy at Chicago Hearing Society.

We started off with a diversity-awareness self-assessment quiz. For the "Awareness Building Activity," we were divided into groups of four. Each breakout was given a large Post-It sheet, and asked to jot down all associated attributes that we could think of for *Senior Citizen*; *Catholic*; *Working Mother*; and *Single Mother on Welfare* (one per group). A member of each group collected and listed the terms, which were presented and discussed.

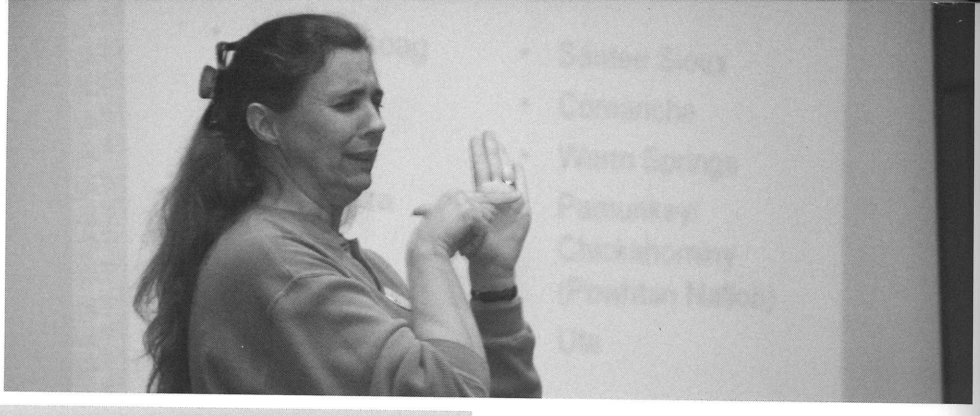
As for ethnic and racial bias, Tak posed a question:

Q: What percentage of Latinos living in the U.S. think that new immigrants should learn English?

A: A whopping 90 percent!

Tak presented definitions for *prejudice*, *racism*, and *bias*, including *guerilla bias*, a term trademarked by Sondra Thiederman, author of **Making Diversity Work**, and which refers to bias "concealed behind good intentions, kind words, and even thoughtful acts." Tak defined diversity as "the mosaic of people, who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values, and beliefs, as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact."

She encouraged us to examine stereotypical thinking, and to embark on a 5-step "Vision Renewal Process" (also borrowed from Thiederman) to recognize, catch, and filter out biases as they creep into our thoughts and attitudes.



Melanie McKay-Cody

McKay-Cody (Cherokee and Choctaw) earned her Master's in Sign Language Studies at University of Arizona, with concentration on the linguistics of North American Indian Sign Language, the first Deaf researcher to specialize in that field of study. She is an educational-program consultant for the Kansas State Department of Education, and is pursuing her doctorate in Multicultural Deaf Education.

Mark Azure (Tsimshian/Hunkpapa Lakota) teaches ASL and ITP classes at Portland Community College.

During her keynote address, Laurene Simms displayed a three-panel cartoon. In the first panel, a bigot tells a black man, "Go back to Africa!" In the second panel, he tells a Latino, "Go back to Mexico!" In the third panel, confronting an American Indian, the bigot is silenced. He can't think of *anything* to say.

McKay-Cody and Azure, assisted by Eugene Edwin, presented an awareness-shakeup session—a basic course in attaining cultural competence about American Indians and Deaf Native Americans, and shooting down some persistent perceptual errors. We were quizzed on basic knowledge—a real eye-opener—and given some stereotype-busting facts.

For example:

Q: How many Federally recognized tribes are there? Forty? Several dozen? A hundred, maybe?

A: 562!

Q: How many Federally non-recognized tribes?

A: 245. (Judy Stout's tribe, the Lumbee, is recognized by the state of North Carolina, but not the Federal government.)

Identifying and labeling, and what sort of terms were acceptable and unacceptable usage, were discussed. (Matrilineal descent and identity were common, by the way.)

Culturally appropriate terms: *American Indian, Native American, indigenous people, natives, Native Deaf, Deaf Native, First Nations, the People, a member of a certain tribe, urbanized, grew up on reservation/reserve, grew up at Deaf residential school, full-blooded Indian (FBI), mixed-blood Indian (MBI).*

Culturally inappropriate terms: *Injuns, squaw, papoose, braves, redskins, savages, noble savages, hostile Indians, Indian students as slow learners.*

McKay-Cody used a PowerPoint "slideshow" to illustrate and emphasize her discourse. Particularly interesting were the illustrations suggesting the variety of dress and adornments of the hundreds of tribes—after all, not all Indian men wore fringed and beaded buckskin, war paint, and eagle-feathered warbonnets, as the persistent image of "the Indian" has it. It can be a powerful and attractive image, but a misleading one.

Mark Azure

"Tipi, Longhouse, Wigwam or Real House—Facts and Myths of Native Deaf People"

We were shown a list of major tribes in the mainland states, Alaska, and Canada, with a note on educational levels (uneducated, high-school dropout, high-school graduate, community college-educated, undergraduate to doctoral degree, and college-educated)—and we are likely to meet Deaf Natives from any and all of these backgrounds.

We then had an introduction to Indian sign language, which was traditionally used among hearing natives (as well as deaf, of course) for intertribal and distance communications, storytelling, rituals, and communication during raids and wars. Contemporary uses include storytelling, entertainment, Native American churches, and Deaf family memoirs.

Especially welcome was the opportunity to learn some NAISL signs, which have their own beauty and logic. We were gulping them down with our eyes and practicing away when the session ended.

Windmilling hands, kicking-up heels

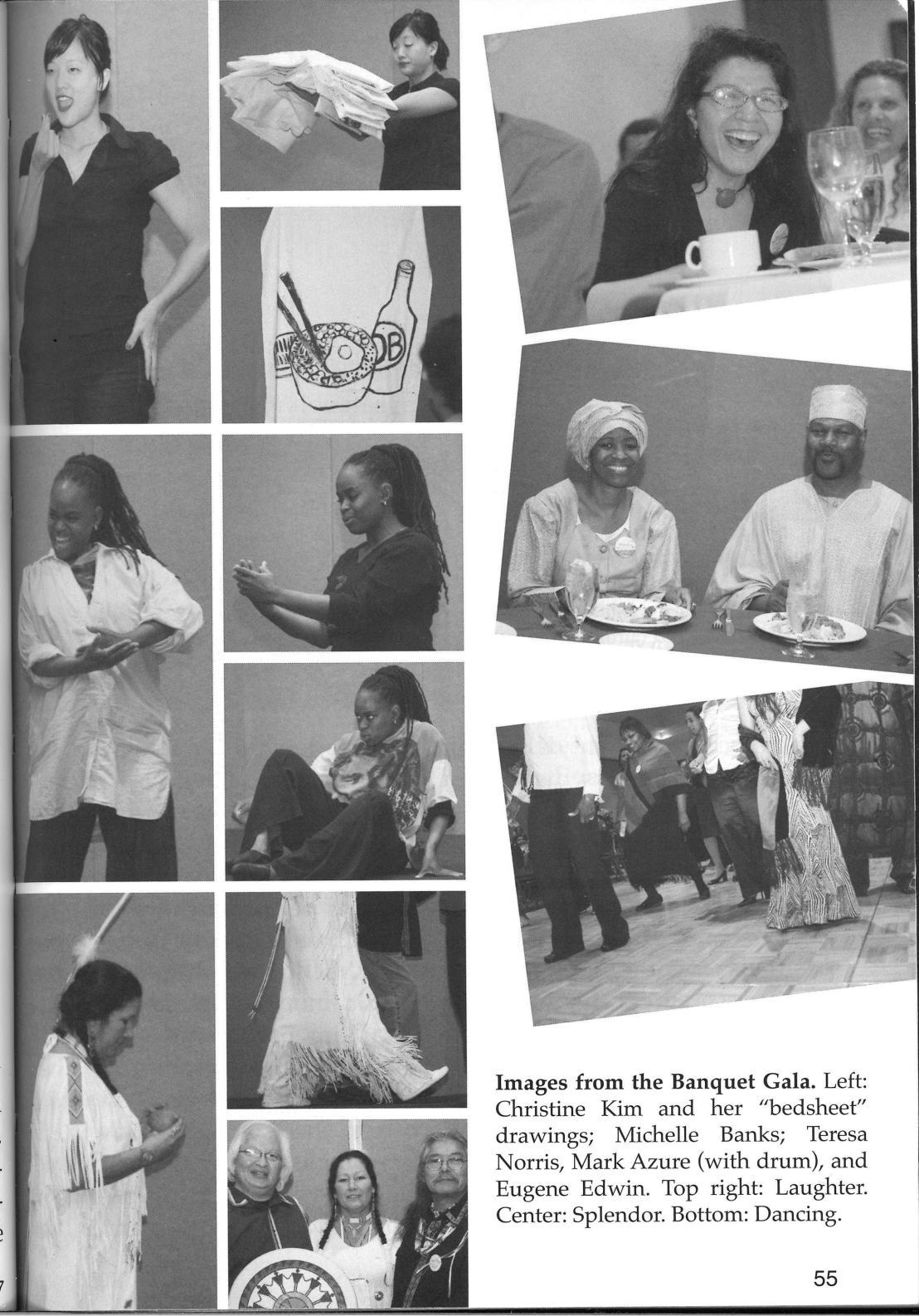
The social highlight of the *Conference* was the Friday-evening Banquet Gala, which featured an elegant buffet representing four distinct ethnic cuisines (African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian, approximately). Many attendees sported colorful ethnic garb, beads, brocades, sarapes, kente-cloth caftans. And a dazzling scene it was. The American Indian contingent in their colorful finery. Don Tinsley looking dapper in a marigold tunic. Thuan Thi Nguyen, elegant in an *áo dài*.

Two of the first three Miss Deaf Americas of color—Lauren Teruel Ridloff (2000-2002) and Tyese Wright (2002-2004)—were there, as were several notables from the Gallaudet University, NTID/RIT, and Indiana communities. For example, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, NAD President; Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, RIT Vice President for NTID; Carolyn McCaskill-Henry, Assistant Professor of Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University; Thomas Samuels, NBDA President; Eduardo Burkhart, political activist; Angel Ramos, Superintendent of the Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Arizona; Ella Mae Lentz, veteran ASL professor, Deaf Culture authority, poet, and performer; and her partner Judy Gough, come in from Hayward, California.

For dessert, there were many temptations to choose from: upside-down pineapple cake, sweet-potato pie with whipped topping, a homey version of *kheer* (traditional Indian rice pudding) with nuts and raisins, sweetened with honey, and a delectable crème-caramel flan.

Moore addressed the audience: "My heart is full of joy to be part of this event. When Laurene asked me, 'Why don't we have a conference for Deaf people of color?' I jumped for joy. I believed in this. My heart was very sad because my mother died [a month after the *ASL 4 Us Conference*], but now I see the hope in you. I thank my staff for their hard work, to help make history. Thank you for being here, and thanks to Gallaudet University for making this possible."

Dr. Simms, elegant in a glittery black top and cream jacket with a bold African-inspired pattern, had a surprise for us. Dr. Robert Davila, President of Gallaudet University, whose schedule



Images from the Banquet Gala. Left: Christine Kim and her "bedsheet" drawings; Michelle Banks; Teresa Norris, Mark Azure (with drum), and Eugene Edwin. Top right: Laughter. Center: Splendor. Bottom: Dancing.

Above: Signage marking two of the four workshops in the session rooms. **Right:** A busy moment in the exhibitors' section, which was thronged during inter-session breaks.

prevented him from delivering opening remarks as had been planned, sent a video greeting especially for the *Conference*, noting how he had grown up without meeting any Deaf people of color as teachers or mentors, or in any positions of influence, the tremendous progress that had been made (e.g., the racial integration of Gallaudet College), and what remained yet to be done—one goal being "to ensure that all deaf children of color, whatever color, have the best education." He praised Dr. Simms's advocacy and leadership, and relayed his best wishes to *Conference* participants, many of whom were colleagues and friends.

Entertainment was provided by Deaf performers of color, with Ridloff as Mistress of Ceremonies. Michelle Banks performed a poetic monologue-dance. Christine Kim performed a dramatic monologue incorporating her black-ink-like drawings on white cotton sheets. Eugene Edwin, in a ribbon-streamered shirt, and Teresa Norris, resplendent in fringed white deerskin and silver and turquoise jewelry, performed two lovely traditional American Indian dances, the second one incorporating a sweet potato held between their foreheads. Mark Azure accompanied them on a tambour.

Afterwards, Azure presented Moore with a handsome tobacco pouch. Ridloff and Dr. Simms received fragrant braided-sage bundles.

This was followed by a disco with a Deaf deejay, Starbaby, and lots of high-spirited group dancing to music with a good loud beat.

"I wish we could continue"

Saturday, March 31

The day began with another welcome breakfast in the Marriott Ballroom; the first session began at 8. Many of us were weary from the excitement of the previous evening, had stayed up late chatting with friends, and hadn't gotten much sleep.

During morning break, a woman gestured towards the Denver Room, the small room just off the vendor's alcove, where the Coalition had set up its exhibits, and said, "Why does the Conference have to end? I wish we could continue!" I replied, "Well, if you could find the money, we could extend it another week!" Just imagine the cost in terms of salary, child care, and all those other factors!

At a conference, every moment is precious. Every hour has to be utilized, and as much learning and interaction as possible crammed into every minute of the limited time. Those who came, I noted, put their jobs and teaching responsibilities on hold.

But didn't we wish we could linger!

In short . . .

Attendees appreciated the highly interactive nature of the eight workshops, the diversity of presenters and topics, and the learning opportunities. Enthusiasm was high. The discussions and dialogues were lively but civil. Participants respectfully listened to each other, and there was plenty of input without putdowns.

What with the tight schedule, there wasn't much time to browse at the vendors' tables, but there were lots of freebies, information, and demos. The VideoPhone demo—enabling at-

tendees to make real VP calls to other VP users from the booth-table—was especially popular. I noted to the Sorenson booth rep that it was impossible to have a private VP call—every passerby could see the conversation—and he chuckled and told me it was a good learning experience—to be enjoyed. Come to think of it, I didn't see any complaints about lack of privacy!

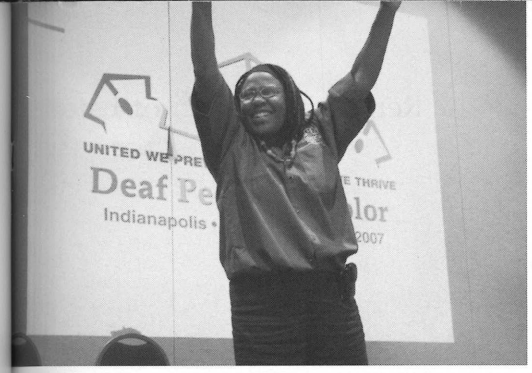
(Thinking) thunder and (ASL) lightning—a brainstorm session!

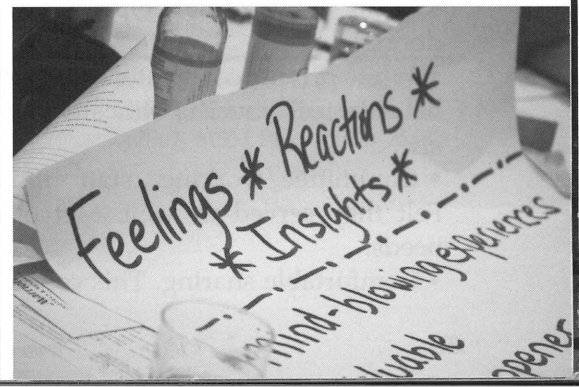
Saturday evening brought the final *Conference* session, the Panel/Round Table Discussion. Dinner was on our own—a number of attendees opted for local fast-food takeouts—and we assembled in the Marriott Ballroom at 7 p.m. Refreshments were thoughtfully served, buffet-style, and they were appreciated. (Thanks to GURC at JCCC!)

The Round Table session gave attendees a chance to share feedback, views, thoughts, criticisms, and suggestions with the Coalition. It was a lively scene—a real brainstorming session. Each table of 10 formed a group and appointed a "delegate." Post-It poster-size pads were distributed, and each delegate collected, categorized, and outlined feedback: reactions, feelings, insights, and thoughts; strengths; areas for improvement, including ideas and suggestions. And "discuss your doable-action plans."

These sheets were brought to the front podium, one delegate at a time, and the findings presented to Dr. Simms and the Coalition. There was so much that the participants wanted to say. We ran out of sheets. There was plenty of input, lots of Deaf applause, and high spirits. A sampling of responses:

- Very informative! Learned a lot about cultures different from my own.
- Welcoming environment—traveled long way but felt welcome no matter what signing ability/culture.





Images from the Panel/Round Table Discussion. Opposite page: Laurene Simms moderating the session. Steven Chough is in the foreground. This page: Dr. Simms on the podium. Participants sharing thoughts, views, feelings, reactions, and suggestions, which are collected and listed by each table's delegates and presented to the Coalition.

Laurene Simms, Conference Program Director, borrows a pen from Matthew S. Moore, Conference Coordinator, at the Banquet Gala.

- Able to get involved in workshops/give input/share experiences.
- Meeting new people, making new friends.
- Participation helps overcome fear of stage (no criticism).
- Participants very excited and engaged—lots of dialogue and questions!
- Feeling of empowerment.
- Exhibitors great! Good variety.
- Workshop presenters were inspiring. They truly engaged in interactive activities.
- The repeated workshops were great! Not miss anything! +++
- Registration/printed materials impressive! Smooth! Well organized!
- Feel bonded—sense of community.
- Great networking! Opens new doors.
- White privilege "threatened"—ha! ha! We feel equal! Politically balanced!
- Committee/working staff *nice!* Felt they served us well. Met our needs.
- Comfortable sharing. This conference and Gala were more relaxing to participate [in] than most conferences—less judgment and less pressure. Felt equal with similar people.
- Hotel served as well . . . impressed.

A few suggestions:

- Find ways to make future conferences accessible to those unable to get funds to come.
- Real-time captioning and interpreters for all sessions.
- More handouts so participants don't have to take so many notes.
- Include other minority cultures—Hawaiians, Guam/Pacific Islanders, Russians.
- A little more downtime, and have sessions on Sunday too.
- Have some workshops that would help professionals to work with children of color in the classroom.

There was general agreement that the *Conference* should be a series. Many attendees wanted to see the *Conference* continued annually. (That might be possible, I noted to my table-neighbors, if the team members could do without sleep! The second *Deaf People of Color Conference* has been tentatively slated for 2010, on the Pacific Coast.)

After 10 p.m., the session was adjourned, in a forest of waving hands.

Long Deaf goodbyes

Afterwards, attendees picked up their scanned passports, CEU transcripts, and Certificates of Participation, chatted in the hallway between the desk and ballroom, and made reluctant goodbyes. Many old friendships had been renewed and new ones established.

Sunday, April 1

Only one session remained for Sunday morning: a wrap-up meeting for members of the Coalition.

After leaving my comfortable 9th-floor room for the last time, I ran into Dr. Simms and Teresa Norris, chatted a bit, a bit, and we shared goodbye hugs.

Overwhelmed, weary, but elated and energized, we returned to our regular lives. I don't think any of us really wanted to leave. Tired as I was, I felt as though my mind had been cracked open and all this learning and awareness poured in. I also felt as though I made a hundred new friends.

One aim of the Conference was to promote the "ripple effect"—attendees carrying their learning and experiences back to their home schools, colleges, agencies, neighborhoods, friends, and communities. The ultimate messages—empowerment, partnerships, awareness, understanding, leadership, mentoring, and bridge-building—will, we hope, be ongoing projects in the Deaf community and beyond.

Had you been there, you would have felt the great rush of positive energy. It was a beautiful feeling. We felt a sense of gain, enrichment, an eagerness to go forth to effect positive changes in the community. ■

Visit the photo gallery at the *Deaf People of Color Conference* site (www.deafpeopleofcolor.org).

DeafLife Reported by Linda Levitan
Photographs by Carmel Flores,
© 2007, MSM Productions, Ltd.

DeafView

READERS' VIEWPOINT

READERS' RESPONSES

Should Gallaudet University allot equal funding to oralist-oriented courses and research?

42% Yes 35% No 23% Not sure

YES (CODA)—I know my parents will disagree with me, but being an interpreter, I have my own opinion. Even though a person may not be within the Deaf community, they still face issues regarding their hearing loss. Maybe if they are embraced and not shunned, our community will grow and serve more deaf.

NO (Not identified)—Certainly not! If given the opportunity, then it would show that we are encouraging Gallaudet to repeat the "Milan Convention" all over again. Forcing the Deaf teacher[s] not to continue teaching by using ASL or other forms of sign language. This would rob our richness of Deaf Culture. Plase do not encourage this!

NOT SURE (Deaf with hearing parents)—Well, it is up to them. If they want to make fund on it then I don't see nothing wrong with it. It will help more oral-deaf people go there.

YES (Hearing)—Diversity, diversity, diversity!

NO (Deaf with hearing parents)—Quite frankly, the oralism movement, which has been in full swing since the late 1800s, has had enough time to "research" their goals. They don't work. Gallaudet is the bastion of deaf education. Please don't allow Bell and his cronies inside those hallowed walls.

Total number of "DeafView" responses: **348**

DeafView

READERS' VIEWPOINT

DEAF LIFE would like to know what you think about major issues affecting the Deaf community. Fax your response to (585) 442-6371, E-mail us at deafview.com or send it to us at Box 23380, Rochester, NY 14692-3380

Can a Deaf person accused of a capital crime get a fair trial under our justice system?

❑Yes ❑No ❑Not sure

Background:

This question is inspired by the recent murder trial of Daphne Wright of Sioux Falls, who was accused of kidnapping and murdering Darlene VanderGiesen, also Deaf. After killing VanderGiesen, Wright dismembered the body and transported and dumped the pieces in various places, including a ditch and a landfill. Wright's guilt was never in doubt. There was some controversy over whether Wright, who was described as mildly retarded, could truly get a fair trial. Experts noted the complex communication and interpreting issues involved. The case was closely watched by Deaf and diability advocates. Wright was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Deadline: July 1, 2007

Visit the
DeafView homepage at

www.deafview.com

to respond to this and the other upcoming questions.
(24 questions are currently posted.)

Since its launch on February 28, 1998, DeafChat has scored over 63 million (63,676,435) hits.

Join us for a celebration of DeafChat and the power of Deaf networking in Summer 2008.

Register at:
www.deafchat.com/birthday

S8 P15 **********3-DIGIT 913
XA 1668 6/30/2008
ANTHONY IVANKOVIC
NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAFNESS—8267
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIV NORTHRIDGE
18111 NORDHOFF ST